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EDITORIAL

IT IS MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS SINCE A THOROUGH REVIEW OF ANABAPTISM IN Central Germany has been made in the light of the latest research. John S. Oyer contributes such a review in this issue and the following one, focussing on Thuringia. The first section gives an exhaustive account of the origin and spread of the movement, to be followed by a second section dealing with its theology. Meticulously accurate and scrupulously objective and fair, Oyer wrings every bit of information from the sources. Paul Wappler first undertook in 1913 the task of a scholarly report on Thuringian Anabaptism; Oyer has now produced the definitive study, surpassing Wappler in several respects. A special feature is the first thorough biography of Melchior Rinck. The two sections to be printed are taken from Oyer's doctoral dissertation (1960) at the University of Chicago.

THE REVIEW IS HAPPY TO PRESENT IN THIS ISSUE ANOTHER BASIC HUTTERIAN doctrinal treatise, edited by Robert Friedmann with his characteristic sympathetic historical understanding. It is the great epistle of Andreas Ehrenpreis of 1650, the "second founder" of the Hutterite brotherhood, presented in a translation of the modern paraphrase by Eberhard Arnold.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH FACES MAJOR PROBLEMS IN EFFECTIVE MAINTENANCE of its witness and life in modern American urban culture, both in the "inner city" and depressed areas where its problem is to stay or re-enter in any form, as well as in the suburbs where its peculiar temptation is to lose its genuinely Christian character. The Mennonite Church in America has never been active in the city to any significant degree, in marked contrast to the Dutch and Northwest German Mennonites where the major congregations have always been in the cities and where today it is such large cities as Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Leiden, and Crefeld that have outstanding congregations. This is due partly to the fact that American Mennonites have been historically rural and small-town people, and also partly to the fact that they have not really accepted responsibility for a major Christian witness or church extension program in the large urban centers. In his penetrating essay, "The Mennonite Witness in an Urban World," Leland Harder, himself for some years a Chicago city pastor, calls upon Mennonites to assume their responsibility for evangelism in the city, and at the same time points out the very real and difficult problems attendant upon such an enterprise.

RECENT YEARS HAVE WITNESSED A GROWING FELLOWSHIP AND CO-OPERATION between the Brethren in Christ Church and the Mennonite family of churches, particularly since the beginning of World War II. This has been soundly based upon the discovery and confirmation of a wide area of common faith and practice. On no other ground could it be explained that for some years the chairman of the Mennonite Central Committee has been a Brethren in Christ bishop, the same person who as president of the chief Brethren in Christ college was also chairman for some years of the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges (the Brethren in Christ colleges being the affiliated ones). The question of a possible origin of the Brethren in Christ from within the Mennonite body has often been raised but never satisfactorily answered. At last the obscurity and

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The Mennonite Quarterly Review

ANABAPTISM IN CENTRAL GERMANY

I. The Rise and Spread of the Movement

John S. Oyer*

Within the larger revival of the study of Anabaptism in recent decades, relatively little attention has been given to an interpretation of the movement in Central Germany, the region where the Reformation was born. An impressive number of source materials on Anabaptism in the old Stem Duchy of Thuringia and adjacent regions have been uncovered and printed during the past sixty years. Some of these source publications were accompanied by narrative and interpretive accounts of the movement. The most extensive editor of such materials was Paul Wappler,[1] who covered over four hundred pages with printed source materials from the archives of Weimar (Ernestine Saxon Archives), Dresden (Royal Saxon State Archives), Mühlhausen (City Archives), and to a lesser extent Marburg (Royal Prussian State Archives) and Nürnberg (Royal Bavarian Kreis Archives). The wealth of this material is all the more apparent today in view of the relative unavailability of most of these sources behind the Iron Curtain. Sources aside, Wappler's delight in displaying Luther and Melanchthon in an unfavorable light provoked outcries from some scholars at his interpretation.[2] It is clear to any reader of his narrative on Thuringian

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1 *Die Stellung Kursachsens und des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen zur Täuferbewegung* (Münster: Aschendorff. 1910) and *Die Täuferbewegung in Thüringen* (Jena: Fischer, 1913) are the principal works of value for this study. In both he relied somewhat on an earlier work, *Inquisition und Ketzerprozesse in Zwickau zur Reformationszeit* (Leipzig: Heinsius Nachfolger, 1908) for the basic attitudes of Luther and Melanchthon toward treatment of heresy.

2 So Walter Sohm, *Historische Zeitschrift,* CXVII (1917), 126-128, who devoted half a

Anabaptism that he was overwhelmed by the amount and diversity of his material. He did not work through his materials enough to disclose the thought of the movement, but presented a series of relatively unconnected pictures of local groups and persons. It must be admitted, however, that the contradictory positions of Anabaptists in his sources present unusually difficult problems in interpretation.[3]

Georg Berbig printed the pertinent source materials on Anabaptism in the Electoral Saxon enclave in Franconia.[4] He provided his sources with a commentary, not a narrative in the fullest sense of the word; his passion for disclosing the radicals as incipient revolutionaries eclipsed his interest in providing an account of their activities and particularly of their religious life. Wappler considered his work of little value because it contained too many errors and the geographic area of his Anabaptist treatment was too limited.[5] More recently Clauss has attempted to trace the movement in its larger Franconian setting, in areas controlled by the Bishops of Bamberg and Würzburg.[6] His treatment is marred by a strong antipathy to the radicals; it discloses little of their doctrine and is directed largely to describing the severity of the punishment meted out to them.

For the region of Northern Thuringia and beyond, the monograph of Eduard Jacobs gives excellent coverage.[7] Although confessionally opposed to what he felt was excessive subjectivism in the Anabaptists, Jacobs succeeded in drawing a comprehensive picture of the movement uncolored by bias. His delineation of their doctrine and life is especially commendable. Jacobs appended some forty pages of sources.

For Hesse, which in the sixteenth century included a section of Western Thuringia, the old monograph by Hochhuth still has value as a narrative, although it is full of error.[8] It is largely superseded

dozen lines to the praise of his printed sources and the remainder of a three-page review to the incompetence of his interpretation. Sohm challenged the accuracy of Wappler's transcriptions in a few instances. Robert Stupperich, "Melanchthon und die Täufer," *Kerygma und Dogma,* III (1957), p. 150, n. 1, dismisses him as virtually useless because he is too partial. The fact of his bias is incontestable, although his antipathy to Luther and Melanchthon appears to be based more on humanistic than on confessional grounds. Wappler did not like religious persecution.

3 See the review by Hecker, *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde,* XL (1919), pp. 200-202.

4 His most important collection is found in "Die Wiedertäufer im Amt Königsberg im Franken in den Jahren 1527/28," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht,* hereafter *DZK,* XIII (1903), pp. 291-353. Collections of lesser value: "Die erste kursächsische Visitation im Ortsland Franken," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte,* hereafter ARG, III (1905-06), pp. 336-402; "Die Wiedertäuferei im Ortslande zu Franken, im Zusammenhang mit dem Bauernkrieg," *DZK,* XXII (1912), pp. 378-403.

5 Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 3.

6 "Kleine Beiträge zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer in Franken," *Zeitschrift für bayrische Kirchengeschichte,* XV (1940), pp. 105 ff., and XVI (1941), pp. 165 ff.

7 "Die Wiedertäufer am Harz," *Zeitschrift des Harz-Vereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde,* XXXII (1899), pp. 423-536.

8 "Mittheilungen aus der protestantischen Secten-Geschichte in der hessischen Kirche: Landgraf Philipp und die Wiedertäufer," *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie,* XXVIII (1858), pp. 538-644, and XXIX (1859), pp. 167-234. Hochhuth wrote a monograph on the

because its sources have been included in the *Täuferakten* volume on Hesse, which becomes of course a major source for any treatment of the Anabaptists of Central Germany.[9] A shorter, less comprehensive treatment of the movement in Hesse can be found in the article by Christian Hege;[10] he however, tends to overlook the spiritualism and the radicalism of some of the Anabaptists.

Wilhelm Wiswedel included persons and pictures from Central German Anabaptism in the first volume of his work.[11] Wiswedel is highly sympathetic, to the point of sometimes being uncritical, since he wrote for the spiritual edification of the Baptists in Germany rather than for the scholarly world. This does not, of course, imply that he neglected the best sources.

With the publication of the *Täuferakten* for Hesse in 1951 the interest of scholars has been focused afresh on Anabaptism in Central Germany. A few monographs based on these materials have appeared in the last two years. Gerhard Zschäbitz applied the "method of historical materialism" to these materials.[12] Among Marxist interpretations his is probably better than average. Some of his observation are stimulating and useful.

Ruth Weiss is the latest to publish. Her excellent monograph, "Die Herkunft der osthessischen Täufer," appearing in two installments in the *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*,[13] is the fruit of research which she had hoped would be accepted as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Jena.[14] Mrs. Weiss emphasizes the religious character of this essentially religious group, in contrast to the interpretation of her Marxist compatriot, Zschäbitz. She gives us a sympathetic and penetrating analysis of the group.

Although the richness of source materials is undeniable, the historian still faces large problems in interpreting them. Since almost all of these materials came from the ecclesiastical and judicial examinations of the Anabaptists, or from letters of officials reporting either these trials or private conversations with Anabaptists, the sources are universally hostile to the Anabaptists. Rarely does one

movement in the County of Solm: "Die Wiedertäufer in der Graftschaft Solms, im Reformations-Zeitalter," *Archiv für hessische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde,* X (1863-64), pp. 360-392.

9 Günther Franz, *Urkundliche Quellen zur hessischen Reformationsgeschichte, IV* (Marburg, G. Braun, 1951) hereafter *TA, Hesse.* Walther Koehler, Walter Sohm, and Theodor Sippell uncovered and edited many of the documents; Prof. Frank added some documents and guided the entire work through the press.

10 "The Early Anabaptists in Hesse," *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* hereafter *MQR,* V (1931), pp. 157-178.

11 *Bilder und Führergestalten aus dem Täufertum* (3 vols.: Kassel: Onken Verlag, 1928-1952).

12 Gerhard Zschäbitz, *Zur Mitteldeutschen Wiedertäuferbewegung nach dem Grossen Bauernkrieg,* Band I, Reihe B of *Leipziger Uebersetzungen und Abhandlungen zum Mittelalter,* eds. E. Engelberg and H. Kusch (Berlin: Rütten und Loening, 1958).

13 Jahrgang I, pp. 1-16, 182-199.

14 Her professor, Dr. Irmgard Höss, is now in the Bundesrepublik.

find a tract or letter in which an Anabaptist can declare himself freely on a topic of his own choosing. Rather the Anabaptists of the available sources always speak in reply to specific questions put to them by interrogators who are thoroughly convinced that Anabaptism is both heresy and sedition, and whose only purpose is to discover the degree to which a given prisoner has been infected by this poison. This type of information seriously limits the historian. For example, a full view of the doctrines of the twenty-five Anabaptists tried at Petersberg near Sorga in August 1533 is blocked by the limited scope of the questions. Of the nine questions put to each in turn, the first, designed to identify the individual with the radicals, was: Do you attend the Evangelical services and distribution of sacraments? In explaining why they refused spiritual fellowship with the Lutherans, some of the Anabaptists touched the area of theology. But in the subsequent eight questions there was no opportunity to do so because the questions concerned only civil matters, at least as the interrogators viewed them. The authorities were obviously fishing for replies which they could label seditious.[15] Again, Anabaptism's mind on the Lord's Supper cannot be ascertained from the trial records because this view of the Lord's Supper was always presented negatively: Why did the Anabaptists not recognize the bodily presence of Christ in the elements? Both on such questions as the meaning of, or the reason for, its observance the Anabaptists were given no opportunity to express themselves. Their interrogators were interested only in determining whether or not their prisoners deviated from established truth, the truth of the real presence.

The validity of the court testimony of the Anabaptists is further compromised by the use of torture. Did the Anabaptists, after being racked, say what the interrogators wanted him to say in order to avoid further torture and in the conviction that he would be executed anyway, or was his fresh information the truth reluctantly revealed? How much of the testimony given under torture is trustworthy?[16] In some instances the recorder of the testimony made no attempt to distinguish between what was confessed before and after torture.[17]

15 *TA, Hesse,* p. 64. See the questions put to the Anabaptist leader Alexander, Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 348-351. Here the interrogators were interested in detecting new adherents of the sect, and in determining the sedition of Alexander. Here was a leader who could have given a more carefully developed theology than could most of the Anabaptists, if he had been given the opportunity.

16 Thomas Spiegel von Ostheim, questioned and tortured on March 3, 1527, declared only after torture that the Anabaptists were to help the Turks extirpate ungodly nobles and civil officers. Beutelhans, a member of the same Franconian group, and like Thomas a disciple of Hut, revealed teachings of Hut that were apocalyptic but not revolutionary—i.e., the Anabaptists were not to use the sword in the great final struggle between Turk and European. Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 235; Berbig, *DZK,* XIII, p. 313.

17 Thus Caspar Spiegel von Ostheim hearing, 1527, Berbig, *DZK,* XIII, pp. 309-310.

Finally, most of the Anabaptists questioned were simple people, without formal education, and not at all adept at formulating replies to the sometimes tricky questions. Moreover some of them had obviously received litle religious instruction, for they freely admitted that they did not know the answers to even simple questions.[18] Some of this may, of course, have been evasion. But since the Anabaptists met clandestinely and infrequently, some who were baptized immediately after their introduction to Anabaptist teaching could not possibly have known much of the group's doctrines.

For this study the Anabaptism of Western Thuringia is most important and will be given special attention. Described in terms of political boundaries, the Anabaptist area embraced Southwestern Electoral Saxony, Southeastern Hesse, and the northeastern part of the Fulda holdings. Geographically it is a strip approximately thirteen miles from north to south, and extending from Eisenach in the east to Hersfeld in the west. There are a number of reasons for concentrating the analysis of Anabaptism here. In the first place the density of Anabaptist infiltration in this region was greater than in any other section of Central Germany. Georg Witzel testified to the prevalence of Anabaptists in this region; he declared that every village and town between Fulda and Erfurt had been infected by Anabaptism.[19] Part of the region, Amt Hausbreitenbach, was under the joint administration of the Hessian Landgrave and the Saxon Elector, hence those Anabaptists who wished to flee the sterner treatment meted out by the Saxons could find some refuge here, as well as fellowship wih their established brethren. Because of sharp differences of opinion on how to treat captured Anabaptists, there is a sizable correspondence between the Hessian and Ernestine Saxon courts, with as a consequence more detailed description of Anabaptists both in person and in doctrine than one finds for other areas. Eberhard von der Thann, the civil officer at the Wartburg, in particular wrote often to Philip in an effort to persuade him to be more severe in punishment.

This region was the center of Anabaptism in Central Germany. Many of the Anabaptist leaders in neighboring regions began here or established contacts with the Anabaptists here; e.g., Heinz Kraut, Alexander, Georg Köhler, Ludwig Spon. It displayed a vitality not always found eleswhere, primarily because of the ability of its first great leader, Melchior Rink, but also because of the influence of

18 See Sorga hearing, *TA, Hesse,* pp. 64ff.

19 From Keller, "Der sog. Anabaptismus am Harz im 16. Jahrhundert," *Monatshefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft,* IX (1900), p. 182.

Fritz Erbe's steadfastness in his sixteen-year imprisonment at Eisenach and the Wartburg.

Anabaptism proper was only one manifestation of a broader radicalism which had swept Central Germany since 1521. The first radicals to destroy the serenity of the Lutheran lands were the Prophets from Zwickau. They were followed by Thomas Müntzer and Andreas von Carlstadt, each of whom, independently of the other, inaugurated his own program of reform deliberately distinct from Luther's movement. All of these radicals, whom Luther termed *Schwärmer,* were spiritualists or mystics; the Prophets and Müntzer relied more on the teachings of the Spirit independent of Scripture than on Scripture itself. The Prophets and Müntzer rejected the efficacy of the baptism of infants, and Carlstadt denied the real presence in the sacrament of the altar. Spiritualism in excess and subjectivism in the sacraments received a riotous reception from the common people. Violence reached its peak in the Peasants' Revolt of 1525. After the disaster at Frankenhausen, Central Germany quieted down, though not for long. Within two years the apostles of Anabaptism had invaded the Lutheran lands and had won adherents among the common folk. Some of their followers were erstwhile rebels who had fought at Frankenhausen. All of Central German Anabaptism was nourished to some extent by the economic grievances of the peasants, but the movement was predominantly religious in character, in contrast to the 1525 uprising of peasants. Much of the scholarly world has considered the two movements to be identical. In this respect historians have followed the judgment of the early Lutherans—particularly of Luther himself—who always viewed Anabaptism as the inevitable continuator of the earlier *Schwärmerei.*

The original entry of Anabaptism into Central Germany occurred in Northern Franconia in 1526, where the intrepid missioner, Hans Hut, began his distinctly Anabaptist preaching.[20] Most of the Anabaptism in this region reflected his influence, even though the scene of his most intense activity was Austria. Hut was a native Thuringian, born in the village of Haina, near Römhild. He served as sexton in the village of Bibra, and there plied his trade as bookbinder and book salesman. The latter business took him on long, extended travels in Germany, where after 1517 he eagerly sold

20 For Hut I have relied primarily on Herbert Klassen, "Some Aspects of the Teaching of Hans Hut (*ca.* 1490-1527)" (unpublished M.A. thesis at the University of British Columbia, April 1958); Johann Loserth and Robert Friedmann, "Hans Hut," *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* hereafter *ME,* II, 846-850; Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 26-30. There is a biography of Hut, written as a doctoral dissertation (Bonn) in 1913: Wilhelm Neuser, *Hans Hut. Leben und Wirken bis zum Nikolsburger Religionsgespräch.* Two chapters of six (Nos. iii and vi) were published in 1913 by Hermann Blanke, Berlin.

pamphlets and books propagating the new Evangelical faith. He even visited Wittenberg, the geographical center of the new movement, where, according to his later testimony, he was disturbed by the absence of improvement in life among the Lutherans and by their failure to satisfy his objections to infant baptism. Already in 1524 Hut encountered serious objections to infant baptism, as a result of which he eventually refused to have his own child baptized. This led to his expulsion from Bibra and initiated the wanderings which lasted throughout the remainder of his short life. He observed the battle of Frankenhausen in May 1525, where he was captured and released by the conquering lords. He had gone there to find a market for his books, and had become enthusiastically converted to Müntzer's eschatological views. Immediately after the disaster he preached revolution at least at Bibra and possibly elsewhere. He then dropped from sight until May 1526, when he was baptized at Augsburg by Hans Denk. This reception of adult or believers' baptism was a turning point in his life. Müntzer's socially revolutionary eschatology was now more and more replaced by one which eliminated the call to arms in favor of an intense conviction that the Turks would inadvertently help to usher in the Kingdom by destroying the German nobility in a decisive battle near Nürnberg. With this conviction he retraced his steps to Southern Thuringia and began, in the summer of 1526, a preaching and baptizing mission which was to carry him far beyond his native regions into Bavaria, Moravia, and Austria on what was probably the most extensive and most vigorous of all early Anabaptist missionary campaigns. Hut won and baptized, in something over one year's time, more persons to the Anabaptist cause than any other leader—indeed, more than all the rest put together.[21] He was arrested at Augsburg and tried in September 1527 after the "Martyrs' Synod." After severe torture he died in his cell in early December, either as the result of an attempt to escape or else as the victim of a fire ignited while he lay unconscious from severe torture. He was condemned posthumously as a heretic, and his dead body was committed to the flames.

The manner of Hut's preaching was impassioned, the content inflammatory. Court testimonies of his converts give evidence of the profound impression made by his preaching. A group of simple peasants and artisans would meet secretly in solitary houses on a village edge, in isolated farmsteads or mills, some already adherents of the new teaching, but most of them not. When Hut appeared he greeted those assembled with the words: "Go ye into all the

21 *ME*, II, p. 849.

world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes the Gospel and is baptized will be saved; and this is baptism—to endure anxiety, want, sorrow, and all tribulations in patience." Then he preached on the imminence of Christ's return: The Turks were about to wreak a most awful punishment upon Christendom, and this was to signal the return of Christ. Other tribulations, revolts, earthquakes, plagues, would harass the land, which scarcely one man in three would survive. All who repented would ultimately survive, though not without severe persecution, and would assemble with the faithful to possess the land with the triumphant Lord. Hut's theme, being thus a mixture of Biblical apocalypticism with the contemporary political setting, successfully played upon the fears of Europe in the face of the Turkish threat. This is not to suggest that Hut's theme was a deliberate attempt at deception. He was earnest, and undoubtedly believed with utmost sincerity that what he preached was God's holy truth. Hut concluded his sermon with a call to repentance and baptism. Those who wished were baptized, unto suffering as Hut interpreted it, and then Hut moved on to other places. His genius was that of the fiery revivalist; he did not remain to carry on the more painstaking work of instruction.

Hut's effectiveness in his native regions was instantaneous. A few of his earliest converts—men like Georg Kolerlin, Kilian Volkaimer, Eucharius Binder, and Joachim Mertz—either attended Hut in his further ministry or were sent out by him to do the work of "apostles." He left behind, however, a series of devoted though poorly instructed bands of adherents in Franconia. Probably the center of the movement was Königsberg, within the Saxon enclave. Here the magistrate first detected Anabaptism in January 1527, and by February had made several key arrests. Under torture the Anabaptists confessed that they were planning revolution.[22] The Bishop of Würzburg, in whose territory some of those Anabaptists were seized, executed two of them, and Elector John of Saxony followed suit with two more. Other Anabaptists, as well as certain suspects, were required to undergo the "Schamstrafe": each Sunday, until services began the culprits were to stand barefoot before the church

22 Berbig, *DZK*, XIII, 295, declares that the sect was essentially political under the guise of religious motivation. Wappler (*Thüringen*, p. 33), following Berbig's sources at this point, insists that at least the group thrived on planned nisurrection. Hege ("Königsberg," *ME*, III, p. 220) finds the movement essentially a peaceful, religious one, with ideas of civil revolt appearing only when the prisoners were tortured. What Hege says about confessions of revolutionary ideas only under torture I find demonstrable only for Thomas Spiegel von Ostheim (Wappler, *Thüringen*, Urkunden 1, pp. 228-235). The other Anabaptists were indeed tortured, but the court recorder did not distinguish between what they confessed before and after torture (Berbig, *DZK*, XIII, pp. 309-316), Wappler and Berbig do not give consideration to the strong element of nonresistance in Thomas Spiegel's testimony, nor to the later unequivocal nonresistant stand of Hut against Hubmaier.

door; then during the services they were to stand with bowed head and eyes in a row before the chancel; after the service they were to confess their sins publicly. Their property was confiscated and sold, though they were allowed to live from the proceeds. Each had to spend a day or two monthly in prison, where they were to renew their abjuration of the Anabaptist error. The promptness and dispatch with which the movement was detected and its adherents punished, together with the severity of that punishment, frightened the fledgling movement and scattered its members. There is evidence of further arrests and executions in the region in 1527, but most of those who remained faithful to the cause fled to more hospitable territories.[23]

From Königsberg Anabaptism fanned out to the north and northwest in late 1526 and 1527. In the regions of Western Electoral Saxony, Ducal Saxony, and Eastern Hesse the movement worked against the background of Müntzer's religious enthusiasm and the Peasants' War. Some of its first leaders and adherents had participated in the Peasants' War. In its earliest forms, under the impress of Hut's eschatological expectancy, it won adherents rapidly because it seemed to echo Müntzer; but it quickly alarmed the rulers. Hans Römer, a battlefield comrade of Müntzer's, led a band of radicals in the region slightly to the south of Mühlhausen. He began peacefully enough to build a congregation of Christians, preaching repentance in the homes of the simple folk. But his eschatology took a dangerous turn when he announced the impending return of Christ as only eleven months away. He and his followers, feeling themselves called of God to realize the coming Kingdom of Jerusalem and to aid in its restoration, planned and began to execute an attack on the city of Erfurt for January 1, 1528. The plot was discovered and judicious arrests made. Römer himself escaped, but was reapprehended in Göttingen in 1534.[24]

Anabaptism of West Thuringia, in contrast to that of Römer and his followers, generally followed more moderate channels. It

23 Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 25-37, is the principal source here. He should be supplemented by the sources, though not the narrative, in Berbig, *DZK,* XIII, pp. 309ff.

24 There are as usual enough contradictions in this case to cause difficulties in interpretation. In the first place it is very clear that Römer's converts were required to formally renounce revolution. How could he then make a complete turn about and not only justify but also advocate revolution? Secondly, one of Wappler's sources, a chronicler of the times, declares that the conspirators were Anabaptists and Lutherans, which gives the movement the appearance of a general revolt ("qui partim Lutherani partim Anabaptistae erant," Paul Lang in J. B. Mencke, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum praecipue Saxonicarum,* II, 71, Ab. Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 43, n. 4). One could try to make a case for Römer's being more a captive than a leader of the movement, but this is useless in view of his prominent role in the plot. Moreover there can be no doubt but that Anabaptists—i.e., persons who had received adult or believers' baptism—were deeply and actively involved. No matter how pious the beginnings, the eschatology grew to fantastic proportions and carried the erstwhile nonresistant Christians into revolution. Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 38-44, and the pertinent printed sources.

had a robust eschatology but tended to pour its energies into evangelistic activity and in some instances into the creation of an active congregational life. The Anabaptists attacked infant baptism, the real presence, and the doctrine of original sin in their teaching. They endeavored to follow simple worship patterns, led by men chosen by the congregations or sometimes self-appointed. The movement was discovered and arrests were made in 1528. Some of the captives recanted and nine of these were arrested a second time near the cloister of Reinhardsbrunn south of Gotha. Friedrich Myconius, the Lutheran superintendent at Gotha, conducted an ecclesiastical hearing. Six of the captives refused to recant, and were consequently executed in January 1530, by order of the Saxon Duke Elector.[25] But the executions served as much to strengthen the movement as to curtail it. Objections were raised in various quarters to the execution of persons who were apparently not guilty of sedition in doctrine or deed. Even Myconius was more than a little disconcerted at the severity of punishment.[26] Justus Menius, Lutheran superintendent at Eisenach, thereupon wrote a book[27] to justify rigorous punishment of the sect by refuting Anabaptist doctrine and revealing the enormity of Anabaptist error. As for the Anabaptists, their growth was checked by neither execution nor polemic; they did, however, make a judicious move to Landgrave Philip's territory, or at least to Amt Hausbreitenbach.[28]

Throughout the 1530's the spiritual center of Anabaptism in Central Thuringia was the congregation at Sorga in Hesse a village three miles east of Hersfeld, where an aggressive missionary activity was carried out by a group of forty to fifty persons. The principle of love meant for them a sharing of goods with those who were in need. They broke their bread together with thanksgiving in commemoration of the death of Christ. For them the reception of the true blood of Christ was a consequence of doing the will of God and it had no connection with their communion service. Here too there was a strong eschatology. These simple folk lived in the

25 The rationale for punishment was based on previous Electoral mandates which forbade Anabaptist activities of every variety, and on the Imperial mandate of January 1529 which decreed death to Anabaptists.

26 Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* pp. 12-13. Also Justus Menius, *Der Widdertauffer lere und geheimnis* (Wittemberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 5130), fols. G4z.-Hr. Menius gives a vituperative account of the event, charging the Anabaptists with being followers of Müntzer and of publicly threatening to stone one of their number who did not agree to recant the second time. Menius could not understand their fearlessness in the face of death. Apparently, as was frequently the case with Anabaptists being executed, they rejoiced at death. He calls them "insanely frivolous" at death.

27 *Der Widdertauffer,* cited above, note 26.

28 On the Reinhardsbrunn affair see Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 221; Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* pp. 12-13, and Anhang I, Nr. 6, pp. 134-137; Menius, *Der Widdertauffer,* fol. G4r.; I have not been able to find a detailed account of the trial, or of these Anabaptists' articles of faith.

expectancy of the impending judgment of the world by God. They spread their doctrines vigorously, working especially in the regions to the east in Amt Hausbreitenbach, and on into Electoral Saxony proper. A succession of leaders is to be found here, but the most influential one, despite his early arrest and the cessation of his activity, was Melchior Rink. Rink was the most important leader of Thuringian Anabaptism.[29]

Melchior Rink[30] was born in Hesse in 1494. Despite a peasant background he attended the University of Leipzig where he received the degree of *baccalaureus artium*. He achieved a reasonable proficiency in the use of the classical languages. His Latin poetry, in a book published in 1516, displayed a competence with the language, although the poetry itself was little above doggerel.[31] From his nickname "the Greek," and from rumor about him, it is certain that he knew Greek well enough to lecture on Greek poetry. He had a reputation as a competent humanist.[32]

Rink appears in the records in 1523 as schoolmaster and chaplain at Hersfeld, where he and a colleague, Heinrich Fuchs, early began to preach the Evangelical doctrine. It was received with mixed reactions. On the one hand the common people received the teaching gladly. On the other hand the canons were enraged be-

29 Ludwig Spon in his trial at Mühlhausen in 1533 gives the best information on the congregation at Sorga (Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 50, who relies on Hochhuth here). Rink had the dubious distinction of appearing in the Catholic *Index*, through an error however. The 1550 *Index* of the University of Louvain, approved by Charles V, included the works of a certain Melchior Clinck or Kling. A later transcriber changed the name to Rinck. Fr. Heinrich Reusch, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher* (Bonn: Max Cohen, 1883), I, p. 120.

30 His name is spelled in many ways in the sources: Rink, Rinck, Ring, Ringk, Reick. There is no good biography of Rink. Wappler's account in *Thüringen* (pp. 50-58) is the best, and Friedrich zur Linden, in *Melchior Hofmann* (Haarlem: De Erven F Bohn, 1885) pp. 171-178, makes a good attempt to save the man from obscurity. Zur Linden made several errors. He had Rink in the Elector's hands after 1531, which is manifestly impossible because the Elector certainly would have killed him immediately; although he rejected Hochhuth's assertion that Rink was killed at Münster, he believes that Rink participated in the Münster kingdom, whereas Rink was in Philip's hands at the time. Wappler relied too much on zur Linden's account of Rink's theology and thus made him out to be a complete spiritualist. Zur Linden's concept of Rink as a spiritualist comes perhaps from his discovery that Rink and Hofmann are sometimes confused in the records because, as zur Linden surmised, their theology was similar. I surmise that zur Linden transferred some of Hofmann's spiritualism to Rink (*Ibid.*, pp. 95-96, 176-179). It is admittedly difficult to deal with Rink because of obscurities in the sources. Rink was the victim of a major attempt at defamation in his trial by Balthasar Raidt in 1528, unless he was completely dishonest in his rejection of Raidt's charges against him. In view of the various character depositions on Rink, and because the Marburg theologians did not protest or contest Rink's rejection of the charges, such purported dishonesty is difficult to accept. Ottius, *Annales Anabaptistici* (Basel: J. Werenfelsius, 1672), p. 7, declares that Rink came with the Zwickau Prophets to Wittenberg in December 1521. It seems incredible, in view of the tremendous excitement these men caused in Wittenberg, that Melanchthon and Amsdorf did not mention him by name if he was in Wittenberg by that time. But it is precisely such misinformation, which tends in general to connect Rink to the more violent manifestations of Anabaptism, that makes the historian suspicious of adverse criticism of Rink in the primary sources, especially since both Bucer and Philip of Hesse were impressed with the man's integrity.

31 Otto Clemen, "Zur Geschichte des 'Wiedertäufers' Melchior Rink," *Monatshefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft*, IX (1900), pp. 113-116.

32 A memo of the Tübingen theological faculty to Duke Ulrich of Württemburg on punishment of Anabaptists in 1535 referred to Rink as learned in both Latin and Greek, enough in the latter to lecture on Greek poetry. Printed by Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 240. George Witzel called him a man of excellent learning. Letter to MBF, December 24, 1531, printed by Wappler, *ibid.*, p. 35, n. 2.

cause Fuchs and Rink fulminated against tithes and the fornications of the canons. On one occasion Fuchs was physically beaten by the canons. The abbot was not opposed to the new teaching; he had even invited Luther to stop and preach at Hersfeld on his return from Worms in 1521. But the wrath of the canons was more than he could withstand. Fuchs and Rink were forced to leave. Their departure, following a farewell address, was attended with violence. The people broke in upon the canons and drove out the concubines. Fuchs and Rink earned the sentence of exile from the Hessian Landgrave because they had aroused the people to violence. But the Hersfeld region rapidly became evangelical as a consequence, to the obvious joy of Wittenberg.[33]

Rink appeared next at Oberhausen, and then very soon at Eckhardtshausen, about ten miles southwest of Eisenach, where he was installed as pastor. Fuchs obtained the pastorate at Marksuhl, a few miles west of Eckhardtshausen. Both were awarded their pastorates through the influence of Jakob Strauss at Eisenach. The records do not mention any significant contact between Strauss and Rink, but the similarity of their interest, besides the fact that Strauss was instrumental in procuring a pastorate for Rink, indicates a considerable exchange of ideas. At Eckhardtshausen Rink married Anna, the daughter of Hans Eckhart. He began to be critical of the Lutheran faith and to favor the more virulent, active doctrines of Müntzer, whom he considered a true hero in preaching, through whose word the power of God was mighty. Small wonder that Rink participated in the Peasants' War, along with Fuchs, who was killed at Frankenhausen.[34] It is not easy to determine to what extent Rink understood what he was doing at Frankenhausen. Eberhard von der Thann declared in a letter to Landgrave Philip in 1532 that Rink had not properly understood the consequences of what he had done in 1525. Eberhard had hoped for some improvement in Rink's attitude, and became indignant when Rink did not implore the mercy of the government for his participation in the war. Indeed, Rink not only failed to repent, but even proclaimed that Müntzer's great cause had not collapsed with the leader's death[35] and that God had spared him at Frankenhausen in order that he might carry on the work.[36] Rink himself had written earlier to Eberhard in protest against the charge that he was inciting revolution, for no one could prove that he had incited the Peasants' Revolt. Whatever he thought

33 Zur Linden, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.
34 Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 51.
35 Letter of Ebarhard to Landgrave Philip, March 1, 1532, printed *ibid.*, pp. 333-334.
36 Letter of Eberhard to Elector John, November 25, 1531, printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 145.

in 1525, by the 1530's he clearly regarded civil insurrection as contrary to the will of God.[37] Rink probably joined the Revolt in 1525, however, with a religious fervor derived from Müntzer.

Rink dropped from sight for several years after the Frankenhausen debacle. Wappler says that he returned to the area around Hersfeld in Hesse.[38] He comes to light again in Worms.

There in 1527 Jakob Kautz, an erstwhile Lutheran preacher who had begun to embrace Anabaptist views, challenged his Reformed opponents to a disputation by the publication of seven theses. He attacked outward forms, such as baptism and communion, as having no power to comfort or assure one of salvation. His own preference was for the inner life, which was the basis of religious striving, and which should be directed toward absolute obedience to God. In a foreword to the theses Kautz gave brief credit to three brethren who had helped him: Ludwig Hätzer, Hans Denk, and Rink.[39] Hätzer and Denk, of course, were known to have been in Worms, working with Kautz on the German translation of the Prophets in the first several months of 1527. The possibility that Rink actually spent some time in Worms with these men may explain his divergence from Müntzerite doctrines, which is obvious from 1528 on. Perhaps he was baptized here. Hege says that Rink joined the Anabaptists in 1528, but gives no sources for the statement.[40] Rink's theology makes a contact with Denk, in person or through his writings, quite plausible.

By 1528 Rink was proclaiming the Anabaptist cause in the regions of West Thuringia. He not only worked with individuals in isolated places in customary Anabaptist secrecy—harvesters in the fields, charcoal burners in the forests, peasants in their cottages—but also demanded the right to proclaim the Anabaptist faith openly before the Evangelical congregation in Hersfeld. For the latter he was summoned by Philip to a personal interview at his hunting lodge, Friedewald, east of Hersfeld. The upshot of the discussion was that Rink would either have to renounce his views publicly at Hersfeld or submit to a cross-examination by the theological faculty of the University of Marburg. Exile was to be the penalty for not responding to either of the alternatives. Rink chose the second, and the hearing took place on August 17 and 18, 1528, presided over by the rector.[41]

37 Letter of Rink to Eberhard, undated, *c.* 1530, *TA, Hesse,* p. 31.
38 Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 52.
39 Zur Linden, *op. cit.,* p. 174 and note 1. On Kautz see Hege, "Jakob Kautz," *ME,* III, pp. 159-160.
40 Hege, "Anabaptists in Hesse," *MQR,* V (1931), p. 158.
41 Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 47, 53; Raidt report of the proceedings, *TA, Hesse,* p. 4.

Two sets of theses served as the basis for the hearing. Upon request, Rink had drawn up his doctrines in a brief, five-point statement. But the hearing began with the consideration of a twelve-point statement of Rink's doctrines composed by Balthasar Raidt, the Lutheran pastor at Hersfeld, on the basis of the earlier conversations between Rink and the Landgrave at Friedewald. Raidt's bitterness toward Rink is apparent; it was undoubtedly due to Rink's former work in and around the Evangelical congregation at Hersfeld, where Raidt now had the cure of souls. But Rink also displayed some bitterness, namely toward Luther and the Evangelical faith. He denied that he had said that the recipient of the Lutheran sacrament received not God but the devil, but he let stand Raidt's charge that the infant recipient of baptism received the devil. He did not unequivocally deny that he had said Luther at first had had the Spirit but later became the devil and the true antichrist. The area of disagreement between Raidt and Rink on the latter's doctrines, indicated by the frequent refutation and qualification of the twelve points by Rink, was very wide. Either Raidt grossly misunderstood Rink, which seems very unlikely, or he was deliberately trying to defame him. Rink's refutation of Raidt's charges was allowed to stand in the court records, which show no trace of a real discussion on the question of whether or not Rink believed what Raidt asserted he did. Rink apparently tried to be scrupulously accurate. For instance, in reply to Raidt's assertion that he had taught the people at Hersfeld that Christ's body and blood were not present in the sacrament, Rink challenged Raidt to produce witnesses whom Rink could question. The problem to Rink in this instance was not belief in the real presence; he rejected that completely; it was rather that he was not absolutely certain he had taught this at Hersfeld, but if witnesses would testify that he had, he would accept the charge. Rink's distrust of Raidt is obvious.[42]

Before the end of the first day the theologians had moved to an examination of Rink's statement. On the first three points he attempted a Pauline statement of man's creation, sin, and justification through Christ. On these points there was no disagreement between the Anabaptist and the Lutherans. Rink's fourth point criticized and rejected infant baptism, and here the hearing bogged down. Rink's critique of infant baptism was answered by Raidt. But the rector did not permit Raidt to proceed to a full justification of infant baptism itself, probably because Raidt was not very persuasive; he let the Marburg theologians justify the practice. Rink never accepted

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

the Lutheran arguments and refused to acknowledge the verdict of Lutheran victory. Hence the hearing did not move on to a consideration of Rink's fifth point, i.e., the Lord's Supper.[43] Rink was adjudged in error and was banished.[44]

Rink, however, did not heed the sentence of exile, but continued to work in the border area of Hesse and Electoral Saxony. In April 1529 Eberhard von der Thann was requested by the Electoral Prince John Frederick to keep a sharp eye out for him in the region between Eisenach and Marksuhl. Shortly thereafter Rink was apprehended in Hessian territory. Imprisoned at Haina for almost two years, he was released and banished a second time, despite Eberhard's appeal to Philip to punish more severely the dangerous revolutionary.[45] John also wrote to Philip, requesting that he, at the very least, order Rink in John's name to leave forever the Electoral lands.[46] During his imprisonment Rink's marital problems came to light. His wife, who claimed he had not visited her at Eckhardtshausen since the Peasants' War,[47] wanted a legal separation. Philip would not hear to this without Rink's assent. Rink's father-in-law visited him in prison to obtain this consent, but Rink would not give it. Rink wrote a sharp rejoinder to Eberhard, who apparently had urged Hans Eckhardt to press for a separation, protesting that Eberhard could not in good conscience advise separation of marriage partners whom God had joined together.[48] Later Rink gave his version of the controversy. Hans Eckhardt, wishing for his daughter a respectable and quiet life as the wife of a pastor, had arranged the marriage with Rink, and all hands were satisfied. When Rink abandoned the life of a settled pastor in the Evangelical faith, the true motives of the parent and daughter were revealed. At first, so it was rumored in Rink's hearing, Anna attempted a flat denial of her marriage to him. He heard that she even claimed he had refused to acknowledge the marriage. Then she modified her stand to claim that she had never really wanted to marry Rink, but that her parents had forced her into it; for the sake of peace she had not protested at the time.[49] Finally she wanted Rink to agree to the dissolution of the marriage. Rink declared that to give herself in holy marriage unwillingly was no less than fornication, and that Hans Eckhardt

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 8-15.
44 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
45 Letter of Eberhard to Elector John, November 25, 1431, printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, pp. 145-147.
46 Letter of Elector John to Philip, December 4, 1529, printed *ibid.*, p. 134.
47 Rink denied this. *TA, Hesse*, p. 36.
48 Letter of Rink to Eberhard, *c.* 1530, *ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
49 It is difficult to reconstruct the picture with accuracy both because many of the facts of the case must be derived by implication only and also because Rink's sentence structure leaves something to be desired.

was guilty of pandering, for he had sold his daughter against her will. Rink confessed his relief and joy at being spared such a dishonorable marriage by the vagaries of life as an Anabaptist apostle. He placed the burden of guilt for their separation squarely on his wife; she did not choose to remain with him, although she knew he was harried and driven about for no misdeeds of his own. Rink cried out strongly against the wolves who forced him constantly into hiding for the sake of the Gospel. This abomination of persecution could not stand up before the judgment of Christ. His entire defense is redolent of the emotion of one who felt himself deceived and maligned. There was even a hint that Rink had been accused of sexual immorality by his wife and father-in-law. But the letter tells us too that Rink was not fair to his wife in this instance, a type of situation multiplied many times in early Anabaptist history, where she who did not share her husband's faith and conviction could not take on the persecution of her harassed spouse. The only possible solution to the problem would have been Rink's renunciation of his faith. This he felt he could not do. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37). Despite the unnatural separation Rink would not agree to a legal action making the separation a binding one. He considered remarriage to be adultery; hence divorce was to him but the prelude to adultery. He believed the injunction of Christ, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6), to be absolutely binding.[50]

Rink composed a tract on baptism during his imprisonment at Haina.[51] Designed as an exhortation to the brethren on the subject of baptism, it was in effect a polemic against the Lutherans and Catholics. He denounced both the Lutheran and the Roman faiths as false; they allowed Satan, that great corrupter of souls, to enter their flock through the medium of infant baptism. But even in his

50 Rink's untitled defense of his refusal to sanction divorce, sent to Eberhard von der Thann, 1531. *TA, Hesse,* pp. 33-37.

51 Baptism tract is *Sammelband,* fols. Kr.-K3r. Translated by J. C. Wenger, *MQR,* XXI (1947), pp. 282-284. The tract was published anonymously in an undated *Sammelband* edition. See R. Friedmann's description of the *Sammelband* in *MQR,* XVI (1942), 82-98. It is preceded by a one-page letter of which Rink declares himself the author. Friedmann assumed Rink to be the author of the following tract as well (*ibid.,* p. 91). It seems likely that the tract was written by Rink, probably during his imprisonment at Haina. The tract exhibits Rink's special interests which can be ascertained from other sources. Its author uses certain phrases and terms as Rink used them (e.g., . . . dieweil er die creatur vnd sich selbs also liebet . . ." *Sammelband,* fol. Kv.). Its position in the *Sammelband* suggests that the editor of the collection considered Rink to be the author and therefore included the brief letter in which Rink identifies himslf as author in order to identify the tract which follows. The cover letter has Rink imprisoned at Haina, and we know from other sources that Rink was imprisoned at Haina from April 1529 to May 1531 (letter of Rink to Eberhard, *c.* 1530, *TA, Hesse,* p. 31; letter of Eberhard to the Elector, Nov. 25, 1531, *ibid.,* p. 48). It is possible that this tract was one of the two writings that Eberhard forwarded to the Elector in November of 1531 (*ibid.*). There is also the possibility that the tract was written several years earlier. A letter from the governor and council of Kassel, witten on March 10, 1529, to Philip of Hesse, speaks of Rink circulating his "booklet" in an effort to win converts (*ibid.,* p. 19).

polemic Rink's passion for evangelism displayed itself. He invited his readers to leave the errors of Wittenberg and Rome and to join the flock of true believers. The tract implies a rigorous discipline for the Anabaptists, in contrast to a complete absence of discipline, in Rink's view, within the Roman and Lutheran churches. The issue of baptism was the subject matter for both his evangelistic appeal and his polemic. He wrote the tract by way of exposition of Mark 10:14: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God."

Rink remained in prison until approximately May 1531. His release and banishment were followed by an Anabaptist mandate of Philip dealing explicitly with Rink's type of case; i.e., an Anabaptist leader who returned to Hesse despite a previous order of exile. The mandate threatened loss of life to such a person.[52] Undaunted, Rink returned to his former work around Hersfeld, and in Amt Hausbreitenbach. Eberhard's brother Martin arrested him with eleven others at worship in Vacha on November 11, 1531. Vacha at that time was under Philip's jurisdiction; Rink was either fortunate or foresighted in always being caught by Philip's men, not those of the Elector. The arrest provided the occasion again for a spirited exchange of letters among Eberhard, Elector John, and Landgrave Philip. Eberhard wrote Philip a lengthy description of Rink's crimes and errors, designating him as an impenitent instigator of the Peasants' Revolt who advocated the abolition of all civil authority and rejected the explicit commands of civil authority, since he had deliberately re-entered Hessian territory despite his banishment. All of this Eberhard considered revolutionary. If that was not sufficient to condemn him to death, he charged Rink with blasphemy. Eberhard argued, as Melanchthon did, that although erroneous belief in itself was inculpable, the public proclamation of religious error was blasphemy and deserved most severe punishment;[53] a lighter sentence than death would be an admission to the common people that Rink's cause was a just one and would enable Rink to win even more for his nefarious sect. Eberhard counseled death;[54] he advised John of the culprit's apprehension and urged him to press Philip for Rink's execution.[55] The Elector urged Philip to adhere to the imperial mandate of April 1529 condemning Anabaptists to death.[56] But Philip persisted in regarding the matter not as sedition, attempted or real, but as erro-

52 Issued June or July 1531. *ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
53 Letter to Philip, *c.* March 1, 1532, printed in Wappler, *Thüringen*, pp. 333-336.
54 Letter to Philip, March 1, 1532, *ibid.*, p. 333.
55 Letter of Eberhard to John, November 25, 1531, printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, pp. 145-147.
56 Letter of Elector John to Philip, December 21, 1531, *ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

neous religious opinion. Although Philip did not condone those opinions, he could not execute Rink for matters of religious faith, nor even for blasphemy. If he did so he would be bound to execute all Jews and Catholics, because he considered them the worst possible blasphemers of Christ. Philip therefore sentenced Rink to life imprisonment.[57]

Various attempts were made to regain Rink for the Evangelical faith. The first of these was undertaken by Georg Witzel, probably in 1531 while Rink was still in the Vacha region.[58] Witzel was attracted to Anabaptism because of its ethical message. He wanted to restore the early church of the Acts account and bitterly charged Lutheranism with moral laxity. But he could not accept the Anabaptist practice of rebaptism or their break with the church. With his passion for the constitutional unity of the church, he tried to win Anabaptists from their error. But he had no ultimate success with Rink, though there is no information about his arguments or possible relative success.[59]

A second attempt to convert Rink was made in 1538 or 1539 by Peter Tasch, an erstwhile Anabaptist who had recently rejoined the state church under the persuasive arguments of Martin Bucer. Bucer had discovered that former Anabaptists were more effective than state church theologians in persuading the Anabaptists to recant, and therefore recommended to Philip of Hesse that he use such persons.[60] Philip ordered the governor of Marburg to release Tasch from prison, after Tasch's so-called recantation, and to send him to convince Rink of his error.[61] Tasch had been a disciple of Hofmann, working

57 Letter of Philip to Elector John, January 3, 1532, *ibid.*, p. 155.

58 It is possible that the discussion with Witzel occurred before Rink's arrest. See testimony of Hans Werner at the Vacha trial, in Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 331-332. Wappler (*ibid.*, p. 79) declares he was visited by Witzel in prison.

59 Witzel was much abused both in his own time and by historians since. Part of his bitterness toward Lutheranism can be laid to the sumptuary manner in which he was treated while occupying a pastoral charge at Niemegk, near Wittenberg, a post which Luther obtained for him. He was suspect in Wittenberg because he did not try to get close to the theologians there, because he openly criticized the absence of an ethical concern both in Lutheran theology and also in church practice, and finally because he entertained Campanus in 1529. After the latter event the Elector ordered him seized and imprisoned, as a suspected anti-Trinitarian. Subsequently released as not guilty, he returned as a layman to his native town, Vacha, bitterly determined to wage verbal war on Lutheranism. He thereby supplied Catholics with much ammunition. His attachment to Reformation ideas and to clerical marriage was too firm to permit a return to Catholicism, but he could not tolerate Lutheranism nor was he tolerated by it, and Anabaptism was too sectarian for him. Witzel was a pastor-theologian without a church, a distressing predicament in the sixteenth century. G. L. Schmidt calls him aptly an Old Catholic of the sixteenth century. He wandered about seeking positions with Catholic princes who had Reformation inclinations. As to Anabaptism, he blamed the Lutherans for having occasioned its rise, i.e., he probably accepted at full value the Anabaptist charge of moral laxity among Lutherans as the reason for their separation from the Refomers' Church ("Erroris huius omnis occasio a Luthero est"). A. Ritschl, "Witzel's Abkehr vom Luthertum," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte,* II (1878), p. 399. See also P. Tschackert, "Witzel," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie,* XLIII (1898), pp. 657-662.

60 Letter to Philip, printed in Karl Rembert, *Die Wiedertäufer im Herzogtum Jülich* (Berlin: Gaertner, 1899), p. 456, n.2.

61 Letter of Philip to the Stadhalder Marburg, December 26, 1538, *TA, Hesse,* p. 261.

mostly in Western and Central Hesse.[62] Again details of the attempt are missing; the mission failed, for in 1540 there is good evidence of Rink's continued imprisonment.[63]

Little is heard of Rink after his arrest in 1531. He was confined eventually to a cell at Bärbach in the County of Katzenelnbogen,[64] some distance from the regions where he had worked. In 1540 Bucer interceded with the Landgrave for milder treatment of the prisoner;[65] Philip had Rink put into a private and more comfortable room.[66] This intercession by Bucer suggests that Bucer himself may have had conversations with Rink and tried to get him to recant. His final end is uncertain. Wappler says that he was still a prisoner in 1545, but his evidence is very slight.[67] It is probable that Rink died for his faith, a "prisoner of Christ" as he styled himself.[68]

What was the character of this man? That he was steadfast and faithful to his cause and calling as he understood them goes without saying. That he was learned and reasonably able in argument is seen in his trial in 1528 and is corroborated by his friend Witzel, who greatly admired Rink's courage and erudition, but called his insistence on rebaptism madness.[69] But what of the fact of his refusal to obey the order of exile? Twice he was banished, and twice he returned to his Anabaptist work within Hesse despite the fact that he probably was required both times to offer an oath that he would not return.[70] Eberhard in particular added this disobedience to his accusation of sedition.[71] If it was a moral issue to Eberhard, was it not likewise one to Rink? Rink did not counsel disobedience to civil authority. On the contrary, he taught his followers to obey the government as long as its demand was not against the command of God.[72] He believed that the order to leave forever a given territory was contrary to the Lordship of God over the entire world.[73] What belonged to the Lord was meant to belong also to His children. He could not accept the verdict of expulsion from any land, for this would have meant that Rink did not consider himself one of the Lord's children,

62 Zur Linden, *op. cit.*, pp. 463-466.
63 Max Lenz, *Briefwechsel Langraf Philipps des Grossmüthigen von Hessen mit Bucer* (3 vols.; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1880-1891), March 17, 1540, I, p. 156.
64 Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 35. Today Bärbach is a small, agricultural village, the seat of a former nunnery which stands in ruins. It is likely that Rink was incarcerated in the convent.
65 Bucer to Philip, March 17, 1540, Lenz, *op. cit., I*, p. 156.
66 Philip to Bucer, March 22, 1540, *ibid.*, p. 161.
67 Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 82.
68 Letter of Rink to Eberhard, *ca.* 1530, *TA, Hesse*, p. 31.
69 Witzel to MBF, December 24, 1531, printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 35, n. 2.
70 I could find no record of his having taken such oaths. But it was the usual practice in Philip's treatment of Anabaptists within his territory.
71 Eberhard to Philip, *c.* March 1, 1532, printed in Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 335.
72 Testimony of Heinz Ot, Vacha hearing, *ibid.*, p. 330.
73 Eberhard to Philip, *c.* March 1, 1532, *ibid.*, p. 335.

an impossible conclusion. Any government, he said, that judges a child of God either with the sword or with expulsion is itself judged by that very act; for such government is acting contrary to its ordination, to its Christian mandate. God never intended that the office of civil authority be used to kill His children. Rink was not surprised that governments so acted; indeed, he believed that the true Christian must expect unjust suffering constantly at the hand of government.[74] But no one had a right to argue for such persecution in the name of the Lord, a point intended as a thrust against Eberhard's arguments. In all this Rink had the firm conviction that he was called to warn the civil authorities of his time of their impending judgment and doom if they persisted in the persecution of God's children.[75] His reference was to eternal punishment rather than to a specific act of judgment on the princes on earth.

Conviction that exile for an Anabaptist was a contradiction of God's purpose and therefore not to be obeyed leads to another trait in Rink's character—anger. His fulminations against Eberhard are full of wrath. He called the Lutheran princes, whom Eberhard served as magistrate, bloodthirsty false prophets who worshiped not the Lord of Heaven but their own bellies; any inconvenience which they suffered brought down their wrath upon innocent offenders. Rink struck a blow against the widespread use of the term *Schwärmer* as a damning cover for all persons not in agreement with the Lutheran princes and theologians.[76] Moreover, Rink was especially provoked by a series of false charges, unspecified for us, by his father-in-law and wife, and also by the persistent attempts to arrest and persecute him and his people. The vigor of his language, somewhat unusual for an Anabaptist, in his warning to Eberhard can be explained at least in part on the ground that he was speaking the warning of pending judgment from heaven. It is also probable that latent hatred of the lower classes toward the nobles in Central Germany found an echo in Rink's words. Rink was, however, rarely angry. At his trial in 1528 there is a notable absence of provocative language on his part. But on occasion one feels the sting of a sharp tongue.

Even when he was not provoked to anger by special circumstances, Rink's passionate nature found expression in flaming epistle and fervid speech. He could convert a group of peasants into ardent Anabaptists with his harangues against the Lutherans. His prison letter to his flock was not a quiet pastoral exhortation to stand firm against the persuasive arguments of the state church theologians and

74 Ot testimony, *ibid.*, pp. 330-331.
75 Letter of Rink to Eberhard, *c.* 1530, *TA, Hesse,* p. 31.
76 *Ibid.*

pastors, with some timely instruction on crucial points of doctrine, although the circumstances of his followers called for such a letter. It was rather a bitter attack against the state church in the course of developing his favorite theme of baptism.[77] His followers often displayed a marked hostility to state church doctrine, but were ill-equipped to discuss its major shortcomings, from the Anabaptist viewpoint, let alone its errors on finer points. Rink was fitted by nature for the task of the fiery evangelist, the itinerant missioner who called people from the darkness of an inadequate faith to the light of the full Gospel. But he was not disposed by nature to abandon his restless wanderings for the quieter task of building his converts into a band of dedicated believers. His doctrine called for the creation of a highly disciplined brotherhood; but he was not the man to develop such a body.

Rink was an intensely dedicated proclaimer of the Word, a man ready and willing to suffer without developing a martyr complex. His impression on Philip and Bucer, both of whom kept a sharp eye for revolutionaries among the Anabaptists, was highly favorable. He emerges as a conscientious worker in the Anabaptist cause.

The activity of the Anabaptists in Western Thuringia by no means disappeared with Rink's departure. Other leaders, though generally less capable, came to the fore. The Hutterian Brethren sent missioners to evangelize Hesse. Georg Zaunring and Christoph Gschäll (Christoph von Mähren) were two of these in the early 1530's. They began a relation between Anabaptists in Hesse and Moravia that was to produce both harmonious fruit and discord. In the latter half of the decade the Brethren even sent Peter Riedemann, who wrote his *Rechenschaft* while in a Hessian prison.[78] Other men, such as Georg Stein, Jakob Schmidt, Ilgen, and Hans Bott, all natives of Central Germany, were also leaders in this region. Alexander, whose major area of activity was farther north, around Mühlhausen, also did some work in this region.[79]

The arm of the law was not idle while Anabaptism was spreading. In July 1533, a group of nineteen Anabaptists was arrested at Berka, west of Eisenach and north of Vacha, in the district of Hausbreitenbach. Some of these were disciples of Rink. At the hearing on July 19 to 21 they could not be dissuaded from their opinions. They refused to attend the Evangelical church at Herda on July 20, where their errors were to be exposed and refuted in the sermon.

77 Baptism Tract in *Sammelband,* fols. Kr.-K3r.

78 Robert Friedmann, "Hutterian Brethren," *ME,* II, p. 855. Letter of Hutterite elders to Mathes, 1538, *TA, Hesse,* pp. 180-184.

79 Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 85.

They displayed an extreme suspicion of their captors; their leaders, they said, had warned them against fellowship with the Evangelicals. Again Hesse and Electoral Saxony were at odds on the type of punishment to be accorded. John Frederick counseled execution; but Philip had the jurisdiction in this instance, and he released all but one, Margarete Koch, who had been apprehended and released before. She was confined to prison for a longer period.[80]

One month later twenty-five Anabaptists of the Sorga center, east of Hersfeld, were caught. This was Rink's major congregation, and many of the people arrested were his followers. A hearing was conducted by the Hessian authorities at Petersberg near Sorga on August 9, 1533. At Philip's direction the questions put to the twenty-five were directed to two major problems: their attitude toward the Evangelicals, and their attitude toward the state. Philip was not at all convinced that they were seditious, but thought them obviously sectarian, for they would have nothing to do with the Evangelicals. Whereupon Philip banished them from Hesse, because he was convinced that Sorga was an Anabaptist center which lent personnel and enthusiasm to the cause elsewhere in his territory.[81]

Both before and after this trial at Sorga, many of the Western Thuringian Anabaptists emigrated to Moravia, the "promised land" of Anabaptists and other Reformation radicals in the sixteenth century.[82] A group of Sorga Anabaptists traveled to Moravia in September 1533 under their leader Hans Bott.[83] But they found no happy fellowship with the Hutterian Brethren. Bott and his followers were reluctant to surrender all of their possessions, as the Hutterites demanded, but eventually consented. Then the Hutterites, displeased with Bott's preaching, told him to desist, whereupon he declared that they were stopping streams of living water[84] and withdrew in favor of fellowship with Gabriel Ascherham and Philip Plener. He and his group, dissatisfied with Moravia, returned to their old homes later in

80 Trial printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* pp. 168-176. Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 88-89.

81 Trial in *TA, Hesse,* pp. 64-69. Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 102.

82 See Robert Friedmann, "Moravia," *ME,* III, pp. 747-750.

83 Bott was not among the twenty-five tried in August 1533. He is an elusive figure, about whom one can get very little positive information. His dispute with the Hutterian Brethren offers the only source of substantial information on his doctrine, and this does not provide a full view at all. He claimed to represent the views of Rink, whose mantle of spiritual authority over the Sorga congregation he apparently inherited. But in these fluid, formative years of Anabaptism there were too many differences of opinion between master and disciple to assume that Rink's doctrines were also Bott's. He got his start in Anabaptism with a strong eschatology in the days immediately following Müntzer's heyday of power among the peasant masses. See Neff, "Hans Both," *ME,* I, pp. 395-396.

84 Bott accused the Hutterites of maligning Rink in their repudiation of his own doctrines. The charge was undoubtedly the result of Bott's attempt to maintain a party of followers among those who had come, and were coming, from Hesse and Thuringia. The Hutterites accused Bott of spiritualism and rejection of Scripture, plus error on matters of the flesh. *TA, Hesse,* pp. 180-184.

1533, but without having their material possessions restored to them.[85]

Thuringia could offer examples of Anabaptism less moderate than Bott. In 1532 the notorious "Prophet" and his followers were brought to heel by the authorities in the Abbacy of Fulda. A group of forty followers fortified a house and provisioned it with food enough to withstand a siege of six months, but with only stones to throw against the forces of the state who attacked them. When their supply of stones was exhausted, they threw substantial pieces of their provisions of meat and cheese. Soon the defenders were led off to prison at Fulda, after suffering the loss of three dead, three mortally wounded including the "Prophet" himself, and many more with minor wounds. No amount of persuasion could induce them to recant, except for the few fellow travelers who had come only to see the "Prophet" perform miracles. Six were beheaded in the hope that others would recant when they realized the punishment that awaited them. They remained steadfast. Probably others were subsequently executed.[86]

The "Prophet" and his followers met the minimum requirements of Anabaptism by submitting to adult baptism. It is impossible to discover what the act meant for them; probably they regarded it as a formal initiation into the group. Beyond some details of their exaggerated spiritualism and use of mass hypnosis, nothing is known of their doctrine. In prison they experienced visions of the Comforter's arrival. In ecstasy some shouted, "I see Him"; one bayed like a hound; another bellowed like an ox; one neighed like a horse. One of the fellow-travelers testified after the ordeal that he had cried out

85 It is obvious that the conflict between Bott and the Hutterites can be laid in large part to the internal struggle among the brethren in Moravia at the time. Bott went over to Ascherham and Plener, who did not agree with each other, not because he accepted their views but because he rejected, and was rejected by, the followers of Hutter. (See Friedmann, "Hutterian Brethren," *ME*, II, pp. 854-855.) The Hutterites appealed to Mathes Hasenhan, an Anabaptist leader in Hesse, against Bott and his fase witness concerning them among the brethren in Hesse. They referred to Rink's moderate Anabaptism, even though they did not know Rink well, but had only heard that he remained steadfast in the faith. They did not trust Bott's representation of Rink's thought. (See Letter from the elders in Moravia and Austria to Mathes in 1538, [*TA, Hesse*, pp. 180-184]. Testimony of Georg Knoblauch, April 15, 1534, printed in Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 358. Also *ibid.*, pp. 103-105.) Mathes is even more elusive than Bott; they both had to be elusive, or else sacrifice their necks. One meets Mathes almost only as a baptizer or teacher of others who were caught. (Thus from the archives, *TA, Hesse*, pp. 156, 205, 262, 291; Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 426.) He was obviously a trusted and faithful leader of the Anabaptists. (Letter of Moravian elders referred to above in this note; also letter of Tasch to Schnabel, 1538, in *TA, Hesse*, p. 161.) Mathes was caught in 1540; Bucer and Tasch argued with him to the point that he admitted he had no certain word from Scripture against infant baptism. He agreed to cease directing people away from the state church on grounds of faulty or improper baptism—i.e., as infants. But he requested time to consider his own rejoining the state church because he was not fully convinced it was a true church (letter of Bucer and Tasch to Philip, Feb. 7, 1540, *TA, Hesse*, pp. 269-270). No more is heard of him after this date.

86 Wappler, *Thüringen*, pp. 81-85. He relies for his information on the correspondence between Abbot Johann of Fulda and Count Wilhelm of Henneberg, March 25, 1532 to May 5, 1532, printed on pp. 336-344. Schannat, *Historia Fuldensis* (Frankfurt, 1729), III, p. 255, reports briefly on the incident.

with the others, though he did not want to; he was conscious of his involuntary involvement with the frenzied radicals. In their frenzy they even requested death; death held no threat for them. The "Prophet" himself was reputedly the worker of miracles, having healed a girl of leprosy, turned water into wine, and even raised people from the dead. All the while he was surrounded by his ecstatic followers who shrieked out his virtues and pronounced his miracles a glorious success.[87] Here was spiritualism gone to seed.

A later manifestation of excessively radical Anabaptism was the movement, again in the southwestern fringes of Thuringia, in the Abbacy of Fulda, under the leadership of Hans Krug, Hans von Fulda, and Peter the Baptist. This group was a mob of robbers and cutthroats who for unknown reasons adopted adult baptism and were called Anabaptists by the civil authorities. Krug confessed that their spirit was not of God, but of the devil. They spent their time burning, killing, raping, and pillaging. Krug himself murdered, or helped to murder, at least five persons. He raped a woman who would not submit to baptism and burned an entire village himself. Again the researcher is thwarted by absence of sources which explain motives and origins. Could this be a group born within evangelical Anabaptism? What was its relation to other Anabaptist groups? The sources are silent on these questions.[88]

One of the foci for moderate Anabaptism in the 1530's was Fritz Erbe. He himself was not a leader of the movement. But his steadfastness through sixteen years of imprisonment was an inspiration to Anabaptism in all of Western Thuringia. Erbe became to the Anabaptists a symbol of the invincibility of truth. First arrested at Hausbreitenbach in October 1531, he was interrogated by Justus Menius. His testimony gives some insight into the manner in which Anabaptists spread their faith. Erbe first encountered Anabaptism in the person of a woman whom he met walking on the road to Berka. She spoke of many things and finally of baptism. She referred him to a Nicholas[89] at Wünschensuhl for further information. He met the man, received instruction, and was baptized. Erbe was not as adamant on the necessity for believer's baptism as were some Anabaptists, but thought it should be left to the individual conscience. He personally considered the baptizing of infants useless, and he felt himself conscience-bound to receive baptism as a believer. Erbe appears, in his brief recorded testimony, to have held the customary

87 Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 81-85.

88 Testimony of Hans Krug, obtained without torture, September 11, 1533, *TA, Hesse,* pp. 71-73.

89 Nicholas Schreiber.

Anabaptist position on most subjects. He disclosed a mild eschatology, which was characteristic of Thuringian Anabaptism.[90] The six Anabaptists apprehended on this occasion were divided between Philip and Elector John for punishment, since the two rulers could not agree on a common disposition of the problem. Saxony's three were executed. Erbe recanted and was released by Philip in January 1532.[91]

But Erbe was reapprehended one year later for refusing to have his newborn child baptized. His arrest was followed by the arrest of the nineteen Anabaptists at Berka, including Margarete Koch, the *alte Garköchin,* to whom he had given refuge on occasion in his home at Herda, some two miles east of Berka. While the other eighteen were ultimately released, Erbe and Margarete were retained in prison for a long time, he until his death in 1548, and she for a unknown period.[92] John Frederick advised death for Erbe, but Philip wanted exile; meanwhile Erbe lay in prison in a tower of the Eisenach city wall. People for miles around regarded him as a martyr. Wappler declares that half of Erbe's village of Herda was converted to Anabaptism by his steadfast courage.[93] Even Eberhard von der Thann, the hardheaded civil officer for the district of Eisenach, who encountered Anabaptism often and found it extremely odious, was moved by Erbe's plight. He probably admired the courage of a man who had much to lose for the sake of his faith, for Erbe was a farmer with considerable property and of course had a family.[94] Eberhard provided religious instruction for Erbe in the vain hope that he would recant. For a time during the instruction Erbe was transferred to more comfortable quarters in Eisenach. After his refusal to recant he was recommitted to the tower in the Wartburg which had been his prison since 1540. Here Erbe died in 1548.[95]

While he was in the Eisenach tower, Erbe was visited by Anabaptists for the purpose of mutual encouragement. This was of necessity done clandestinely; on two occasions persons were caught at the wall conversing with the prisoner. In November 1537 two men were surprised at night by the guard outside Erbe's tower cell in conversation with Erbe. Menius conducted the examination of the men. The record of their trial shows them to have been moderate Anabaptists

90 Trial, October 9-11, 1531, printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* pp. 138-139.

91 *Ibid;* letter of Eberhard to John Frederick, December 14, 1540, *ibid.,* p. 210.

92 Koch was reinterrogated in 1537. She drops from the records this time. *TA, Hesse,* pp. 152-253.

93 Wappler, *Thüringen,* p. 87.

94 Letter of Eberhard to John Frederick, January 8, 1541, printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens,* p. 211. *Ibid.,* p. 94 ". . . Dyweil er dan Leibs vnd halber . . . vast vnuormugelich vnd . . . das er biss auff diese seine misshandlunge Einen guten wandel gefurth vnd sich je vnd allewege billichs gehorsames gehalten, Er auch mit weib vnd kinder vnd zimlicher Bauerssnarunge . . . besessen . . ."

95 *Ibid.,* pp. 91-94.

who emphasized a righteous walk for the Christian and eschewed fellowship with preachers whose lives were sinful. They rejected infant baptism and the real presence for the usual reasons, and looked forward to persecution for the true Christian; for to suffer persecution was the true Lord's Supper, the true communion with Christ. The two were not found guilty of any subversive plots against civil authority, but were found guilty of seditious views, as defined by the Lutherans. They rejected private property on the grounds that everything belonged to the Lord. Oaths and suits at law they considered forbidden the Christian. They were skeptical about a Christian serving as magistrate, although they would not declare themselves unequivocally on the point. Despite torture they refused to recant. At the order of Elector John Frederick they were executed in January 1538 as blasphemers and revolutionaries.[96]

A second group, this time of three men, was apprehended in May 1539. These men displayed an aggressive spiritualism that scorned Scripture as authority; the Spirit of God, they maintained, instructed man apart from Scripture, which was a dead letter. They heaped abuse on the Evangelical Lord's Supper, styling the bread the bite of Judas and the cup the curse of the Babylonian Whore (Rev. 17:5). True communion was persecution for Christ's sake and discipleship. They denied the bodily resurrection from the dead. Government they considered unnecessary for Christians. Oaths were forbidden except in a few instances. Concerning private property they said it was permissible if it was shared with people in need. The Wittenberg court decreed torture to induce recantation. The treatment was successful, and thereby saved the trio from execution for blasphemy.[97] But the common people tended all the more to regard Erbe and those who visited him as bearers of the truth. Precisely in this geographical region where the princes disagreed on how to handle errors in religious doctrine they were suspicious of the use of force to induce a restoration of true faith. They were convinced that Scripture was on the side of Erbe, both because Erbe would not recant despite persecution, and also because the Evangelicals were reduced to the argument of force. "If he could be overcome by [arguments from] God's Word, he would not be a captive for so long a time."[98]

96 Trial record from Menius' pen printed in Wappler, *ibid.*, pp. 196-198. Narrative in Wappler, *Thüringen*, pp. 172-174. The order of the court is missing and the precise grounds for execution are therefore unknown. Elector John Frederick, in his letter of November 22, 1537, to the Mayor and Council of Eisenach on the case describes the captives' beliefs as "unchristian and revolutionary." Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 199.

97 Account of the trial, June 1539, in Wappler, *ibid.*, pp. 203-204. The three were required to do public penance on two or three successive Sundays in Eisenach. They were commanded to remain with the Evangelicals throughout their lives; they were never to go over to the Catholics. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

98 Mayor Johann Ley and the Eisenach Council paraphrasing the attitude of the com-

Erbe was a prophet and martyr to the common folk of Western Thuringia. Because of his fame, he was moved to the less accessible Wartburg fortress.[99]

Interminable imprisonment or banishment in Hesse, execution in Electoral Saxony, but still the movement did not die, although it was retarded. Early in 1544 there were fresh arrests in Berka, Erbe's home community. His wife was one of sixteen caught here. Some recanted; others refused. There ensued the usual dispute between Hesse and Electoral Saxony on treatment. Philip used an ex-Anabaptist in an effort to induce more recantations. The Saxons, led in this instance by Menius, argued for execution. Menius charged Philip with contributing to the spread of Anabaptism in the region because of his refusal to adopt sterner measures against the radicals.[100] But during the remaining 40's the movement died down throughout Thuringia. Persecution had taken its toll. The steadfast among the brethren had emigrated to more hospital regions,[101] and those who remained made their peace with the state church.

Central German Anabaptism was not, of course, confined to Western Thuringia. It spread to the northern part of the old Medieval Stem Duchy and on beyond into the region of the Harz Mountains, and appeared in Western and Central Hesse. Although the movement in these regions need not detain us long, a brief overview might be useful at this point.

Anabaptism spread early to Northern Thuringia, probably from Franconia. One finds traces of it in the records in 1527. It reached its high point in the 1530's. All of its most influential leaders had connections with Anabaptism farther south. Georg Köhler originated near Zwickau, and spent some time among the Anabaptists around Vacha and Herda.[102] Alexander, the most influential of the Northern Thuringian leaders, ranged from Göttingen to Weimar and Sorga in his itinerant mission.[103] Hans Bott was a leader of the Sorga Anabaptists after the incarceration of Rink. Ludwig Spon gives us a description of congregational life at the Sorga Anabaptist center; obviously he had been there.[104] Heinz Kraut was arrested, tried and executed in the region around Jena.[105] Here, and farther north in the Harz,

mon people in a letter to Elector John Frederick and Duke John Ernest, end of July 1539, printed *ibid.*, p. 208.

99 *Ibid.* I can find no evidence of a sentence of life imprisonment on Erbe. In effect this is what he received.

100 *Ibid.*, pp. 97-100.

101 Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 105, says that many emigrated to Moravia, particularly the disciples of the Hutterian apostles like Riedemann.

102 Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 78, 81, 86. Wappler, *Thüringen*, p. 118.

103 Wiswedel, *op. cit.*, I, p. 89.

104 Wappler, *Die Stellung Kursachsens*, p. 47.

105 *Corpus Reformatorum*, II, pp. 997-1003. Jordan, "Wiedertäufer in Mühlhausen," *Mühlhäuser Geschichtsblätter* XV (1915), pp. 42, 44, considers these five men the most

the brethren called themselves the "Beloved of God," or the "Friends of God."[106] There were the usual arrests, trials, and executions. There were the usual arrests, trials, and executions. There were centers of Anabaptists at various times at Mühlhausen, Sangershausen, Frankenhausen, Esperstedt, and Emseloh. The movement at Mühlhausen received special attention because three princes had political control in successive years, each for one year at a time after the Peasants' War; and they did not agree on how to handle the sectarians. Saxon Duke George and the Saxon Electors generally followed the imperial mandate of 1529. Philip of Hesse always sought to obtain recantations, which were followed by release from prison. The Anabaptists in these regions were very similar to those in Western Thuringia with respect to doctrine and practice. One finds traces of what may well have been a large amount of intercourse between the regions, e.g., the peregrinations of the leaders mentioned above. After the death of Duke George in 1539, his lands became Protestant. With this process and its concomitant persecution the movement died out.[107]

In Central and Western Hesse a movement is discerned which is mixed and meshed with that of Western Thuringia to its east. But this movement probably originated, and was certainly nourished, from different sources. Here is found the influence of Melchior Hofmann and the whole line of prophets and teachers from the Lowlands and the Rhineland. Hofmann's spiritualism, including his peculiar view of the incarnation, is found among the Anabaptists in this region. In this region there were five principal leaders, four of whom were captured and examined at the same time. Georg Schnabel, Peter Lose, Hermann Bastian, and Leonhard Fälber were surprised with twenty-six other Anabaptists at worship in an abandoned church near Gemünden on the Wohra. These five were imprisoned with six others at Wolkersdorf, where they were dealt with so leniently that they were able to enlarge the opening through which their food was given them, so that they could pass in and out. They returned to the prison from time to time, but spent long periods of time outside at their missionary activity. It is reported that Schnabel baptized thirty persons during the period of one year before the opening was discovered. A dispute between the four and Bucer, who represented the state church, was held at Marburg from October 30 to November 1,

important leaders of Anabaptism north of the Eisenach-Berka line. One could add Bernhardus, who influenced Alexander, and Volkmar von Hildburghausen who baptized Alexander; but very little is known of the activity and doctrines of these men. "Alexanders Confession," printed in Wappler, *Thüringen,* pp. 348-349.

106 Jacobs, *op. cit.*

107 For detailed coverage of the movement in these regions see Jacobs, *op. cit.*, and Wappler, *Thüringen,* Chapter I of Book I and Chapters IV, V, and VII of Book II.

1538. Bucer was admirably suited for the task, since he did not feel compelled to defend the Lutheran church at every point against which the Anabaptists raised their complaints. He admitted the necessity for church discipline; he did not try to justify ecclesiastically the practice of persecution of Anabaptists; he even admitted that the church must be more conscientious in its efforts to give religious instruction to children as a follow-up to infant baptism. He repeatedly put before these Anabaptists the evil of separation from the church, a church which, though not pure in every respect, nevertheless proclaimed God's truth. These Anabaptists succumbed, agreed to receive instruction, and were received back into the church, but not without maintaining a certain bargaining position, i.e., they would return to the church only if the church made changes. After a series of written exchanges, the Anabaptists were convinced that the state church theologians were in earnest. Besides the return of these Anabaptists to the church, together with Peter Tasch, the fifth leader of importance, this affair resulted in the adoption of a discipline for the Hessian church in 1538 which instituted confirmation and introduced the idea of the ban. Not all of the Hessian Anabaptists accepted the compromise; inured by years of persecution they were suspicious of any dealings with state church officials. Consequently Bucer proposed that the leaders who recanted should be sent out to induce their erstwhile flocks to re-enter the state church. Tasch and others were subsequently dispatched on such missions with some measure of success. As a settled church life spread throughout these regions of Hesse, the Anabaptist movement gradually subsided.[108]

It must be noted in passing that the Anabaptist leaders in this region had the ability and opportunity to articulate their views more satisfactorily than did most of their brethren in Central Germany. They could speak a theological language. One need mention only the "Confession" of Peter Tasch[109] and the "Vindication" of Georg Schnabel[110] by way of example.

One final development must be at least mentioned here. This is the group called the "Blood Brothers,"[111] led by Klaus Ludwig of Tungeda, a native of the Gotha region; it spread in the 1540's and

108 The most substantial narrative of the movement here described is that of Hochhuth, *op. cit.* Much of this has been summarized by Hege, "The Early Anabaptists in Hesse," *MQR*, V (1931), pp. 157-178, and in "Hesse," *ME*, II, pp. 719-727. Rembert, *op. cit.*, pp. 450-453, has worthwhile discussions of Tasch and Fälber.

109 "Glaubensbekenntnis der in Marburg gefangenen Wiedertäufer," *TA, Hesse*, pp. 247-257. Earlier printed in part as "Bekenntniss eines Wiedertäuffers," by zur Linden, *op. cit.*, pp. 463-466.

110 "Verantwortung und widerlegung der artikel, so jetzund im land zu Hessen uber die armen Davider (die man widertaufer nennt) usgegangen sind," *TA, Hesse*, pp. 165-180.

111 *Blutsfreunde*. Hochhuth, *op. cit.*, p. 182, declares that these are the "Freie Brüder" of Bullinger.

1550's in the region between Gotha and Mühlhausen. It combined a critique of infant baptism with libertinism and murder, and terrorized the land. It had no connections with any ecclesiastical group nor with the Anabaptists, although it was confused with Anabaptism by the common people. Menius published a refutation of the sect in 1551.

Anabaptism as a movement faded in Central Germany from 1540 on. The spread of authority and chains of responsibility within the state churches was too much for the beleaguered brethren. Deprived of vigorous leadership by persecution and emigration the movement disappeared. It had never commanded a large following,[112] although its ability to capitalize on peasant grievances and dissatisfaction with the embryonic state churches made it a formidable threat to the magisterial Reformation in its early years. It left its imprint on the state churches in the institution of confirmation and in the idea of the ban.[113]

112 Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 49, rightly challenges Wappler's assertions that Anabaptism found many supporters. Jordan cites six executions in Mühlhausen, a city of 8500 inhabitants and a reputed Anabaptist center. Wappler builds numerical strength on the theory that the court records of Anabaptist examinations cover only a small percentage of the total Anabaptist population. This theory is plausible but dangerous. Nor should one build numerical strength on the degree of concern of the princes. The civil authorities were worried, almost panicked, because they saw in the movement the constant threat of another peasant war. O. A. Hecker in a review of Wappler's Thuringia book in *Neues Archiv für sächsiche Geschichte und Altertumskunde,* XL (1919), p. 201, counted ninety martyrs in the entire region. Ninety martyrs to a cause is no small number; but one cannot speak of this movement as a mass one.

113 See Hege, "Hesse," *ME,* II, pp. 726-727 for the opinion of Walter Sohm. See also Franklin Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (2d revised ed.; Boston: Star King Press, 1958), p. 36 for the influence of Anabaptism on the state church.

(Continued from Page 218)

confusion surrounding this issue has been cleared away, as can be seen in the convincing discussion in this issue by Ira Landis of "The Origin of the Brethren in Christ Church." The decisive document of 1754 relating to this question, which was discovered by Landis, is presented in this issue in English tranlsation. A number of related questions still remain to be answered. What does the earliest confession of faith of the BC group reveal as to its theological connection with Mennonitism? Where do the differentiating traits of immersion and the beard come from, if not from the Dunkards? Why did some Dunkards early join the group, and who were they? A simple Mennonite connection is not enough to explain the origin, even though the identity of most of the first Brethren in Christ heads of families is safely fixed as Mennonite. Considerable work remains to be done, and it is encouraging to know that Dr. Carlton Wittlinger, Professor of History in the leading Brethren in Christ college (Messiah at Grantham near Harrisburg, Pa.), is working on the history of the group under a commissioin from its General Conference. Landis has added to the value of his essay on origins by reporting on the origin of the several schisms in the BC group which took place during the nineteenth century.

AN EPISTLE CONCERNING COMMUNAL LIFE

A HUTTERITE MANIFESTO OF 1650 AND ITS MODERN PARAPHRASE

ROBERT FRIEDMANN*

The document printed on the following pages is in more than one sense a unique and remarkable writing. Drawn up originally around 1650 for missionary purposes, printed in 1652 primarily for the strengthening of the Hutterite community at home (Slovakia), it was rewritten, paraphrased and condensed in 1928 as a sort of "Manifesto," practically for the same purpose, namely mission and guidance. It thus represents at once an old and a new document, identical though in spirit, Anabaptist to be sure. In either form it is one of the strongest statements concerning communal life which the Hutterites ever produced and contains some of the best arguments for such a life. In order to appreciate its genius and intent, it will be necessary to reconstruct its genesis as far as possible and to interpret the ideas which produced this work.

I. The original document. The Hutterites have no dearth of writings concerning their great principle of community of goods; in fact almost since their very beginning (about 1533) they had been eager to prove to themselves and to everyone else that such a way is an absolute requirement for everyone who wants to follow Christ and be His disciple. When in 1545 the "Gabrielite" Brethren decided to join the Hutterites in Moravia, conversations were held to formulate the basic principles upon which such a fusion would be achieved. The result was a document called *Die fünf Artikel des grössten Streites zwischen uns und der Welt.*[1] Later, about 1577, it was reworked by Bishop Peter Walpot and shaped into a large doctrinal document called "The Great Article Book," also known as *Ein schön lustig Büchlein.* In this work Article Three deals at great length with the principle of community of goods; it was this particular article which was published in an English translation in the REVIEW (1957) under the title, "Concerning True Surrender [*Gelassenheit*] and Christian Community of Goods."[2]

In 1601 the bishop of the Hutterite Brethren in Moravia, Klaus Braidl, conceived an elaborate defense of the same principle with

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1 A. J. F. Zieglschmid, *Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder* (Philadelphia, 1943), pp. 269-316.

2 "A Notable Hutterite Document Concerning True Surrender and Christian Community of Goods" (introduced by R. Friedmann), *MQR* XXXI (1957), pp. 22-62. The translation was done by Kathleen Hasenberg of the Society of Brothers.

the idea of convincing the Swiss Brethren that their way, even though close to the Hutterite one, was not altogether the proper path of discipleship. A document was then drawn up in the form of a collective missive of the Hutterite brotherhood in Moravia to be sent to the (Anabaptist) minister Christian Raussenberger in Switzerland. It is perhaps the longest epistle ever written by Hutterites, covering not less than one hundred pages in the one codex in which it is extant.[3] It contains a detailed exegesis of all the books of the New Testament to show that everywhere the principle of community of goods was implied.[4] Not long afterwards, in 1605, the learned Hutterite barber-surgeon Joseph Hauser wrote another elaborate defense of the same idea under the title, *Unterrichtung dass die Gemeinschaft der zeitlichen Güter eine Lehre des Neuen Testamentes sei und von allen Gläubigen erfordert wird.*[5] It is found in the same codex which contains the Braidl letter, and has been copied many times since.

After their expulsion from Moravia in 1622 the Hutterite brotherhood experienced a sharp decline. The old missionary spirit waned, and life in Slovakia during the Thirty Year's War and the Turkish attacks was so hard that the old discipline began to slacken. At this critical moment the Brethren were fortunate enough to find in their midst a leader of truly great stature—Andreas Ehrenpreis (1589-1662).[6] Elected in 1621 as minister, actual leader of the church at large since 1630 and its bishop (*Vorsteher*) since 1639, this unusual man achieved almost as much as a Jakob Hutter or a Peter Riedemann had one hundred years earlier. That there is still a Hutterite brotherhood, with alertness and loyalty to the old way, is due almost exclusively to the work of this unique Anabaptist leader of a rather late generation. Ehrenpreis, born of Württemberg stock on a Moravian Bruderhof, by profession a miller but by avocation a theologian and church leader, set himself to the almost superhuman task of redressing the decline and reviving the old brotherhood along its time-honored lines of strict community of goods, discipline, nonresistance, and the spirit of brotherly love and discipleship. During his lifetime he succeeded to a remarkable degree. Internally he strengthened the brotherhood by rules and regulations (*Gemeindeordnungen*); externally he undertook again the work of mission, try-

3 Codex III, 148, of 1615, in the Library fo the Archbishop of Esztergom, Hungary.

4 Brief excerpts in Beck, *Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer* in Oesterreich (Vienna, 1883), p. 211. Today this epistle is very popular among the Canadian Hutterites.

5 This tract is scheduled to be published in L. Müller and R. Friedmann, *Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Täufer,* II (1961). It might be worth mentioning that the Unitarian author Valentin Schmalz (Smalcius) of Rakow, Poland, wrote a refutation of the book in 1606. See S. Kot, *Socinianism in Poland* (Boston, 1957), p. 151.

6 See article "Ehrenpreis" in *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* II, pp. 165f.

ing to win over "Swiss Brethren" as well as "Unitarians" (Polish Brethren) in Danzig and elsewhere.

Among his many writings still extant, both in European libraries and among the Hutterites in North America and among the Society of Brothers in Paraguay, one document stands out in particular: his great *Sendbrief an alle diejenigen, so sich rühmen und bedünken lassen, dass sie ein abgesondertes Volk von der Welt sein wollen (als sonderlich Mennisten, Schweizer Brüder und andere mehr) . . . brüderliche Gemeinschaft, das höchste Gebot der Liebe, betreffend.* In the rich library of the Primate (archbishop) of Hungary in Esztergom (Gran),[7] Codex III, 137 ex 1650 contains this *Sendbrief* together with Ehrenpreis's excerpts and paraphrase of the great Article Book of 1577, filling 165 leaves in octavo. We do not know whether this is the earliest manuscript to contain this epistle. In any case we may assume that it was written sometime before 1650, when missioners were sent from Slovakia to visit Switzerland and possibly also parts of Western Germany to spread the Hutterite message. This "Epistle" was originally addressed to "Mennisten, Swiss Brethren and others," obviously out of missionary motivations. We do not know much about the effect of these activities. The Dutch and North German Mennonites were hardly receptive to such a message, and the Swiss Brethren, whose struggle at home was so difficult and whose existence was then so precarious, were hardly much more willing to listen to this call and to join the Slovakian Hutterites in 1650.[8] That the letter was primarily drawn up with missionary intentions can be seen in part from its contents (for instance at several places the Swiss are mentioned and Menno Simons' widely read *Fundament-Buch* is quoted), but still more from the fact that Ehrenpreis appended to his text a document called "Brüderliche Vereinigung zwischen uns und etlichen Schweizer Brüdern" [of 1556-1557] with details concerning the points of agreement. In 1652 Ehrenpreis had his *Sendbrief* printed as a booklet, one of the only three printed books ever published by the Hutterites. The only known copy is to be found in the Esztergom library (Codex III, 126), which contains the printed book minus the title page, bound with the handwritten first article of the great Article Book of 1577. The leather binding of this codex is embossed with the date 1655, but from American copies we know that the print itself dates back to 1652. We must assume that Ehrenpreis decided on a print both for home consumption and for promotional purposes.

7 See "Esztergom," *ME*, II.

8 The Hutterites also tried a direct method: a Bruderhof was established at Mannheim, Germany, in 1652, as a sort of object lesson to the brethren in Germany. But it was not successful and was dissolved in 1684. No new members had come from the outside to Slovakia.

At that particular time a lively correspondence with Danzig (then Polish) might have suggested the distribution of such a book also among the Socinians of Poland, whose leaning toward communal living was well known.[9]

Copies of the *Sendbrief* must have been in existence throughout the following centuries. In 1920 Elias Walter, the outstanding bishop of the Hutterites in Canada,[10] decided that it would serve the brotherhood well to have this programmatic tract printed again. Thus a book of 189 pages was produced, with the notice "aufs Neue herausgegeben von den Hutterischen Brüdern in Amerika. 1920. Scottdale, Pa.,"[11] which found fairly wide distribution. In 1955 it was reprinted again in Canada.

Although Walpot's Third Article had based its argument primarily on the idea of *Gelassenheit,* i.e., surrender or resignation[12]—a principle in Anabaptism first proposed by the early Anabaptist brother Ulrich Stadler—the argument for community of goods later shifted to a more biblicistic and exegetical ground: it is God's command as revealed on every page of the New Testament (see the Raussenberger epistle). And now Ehrenpreis again shifted the center of his reasoning, this time making *love* the very core of the idea of communal living.[13] "Wo keine Gemeinschaft ist, da ist auch keine rechte Liebe."[14] Love requires sharing, "life in community is the fulfilment of love."[15] The opposite of love and sharing, Ehrenpreis claims, is greed (*Geiz*).[16] "All who live in community do this for love alone." Into this general framework Ehrenpreis skilfully inserted the ancient and beautiful allegory of the bread and wine on the Lord's Table. This allegory has a long tradition (appearing for the first time in the *Didache,* the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," of the early second century) but it has not yet lost its fine pungency. As each grain of wheat has to give up its individuality in order to become bread, and as each single grape has to yield its juice to the whole to become wine (and any grain or grape that resists will be discarded), just in the same way each member of the Fellowship of the Lord's Table has to yield his self-will in order to become a real part of the entire brotherhood or church.[17] At another place[18] Ehrenpreis makes an allusion to the

9 Cf. Kot's exhaustive study on this topic, quoted in note 5.
10 See "Walter, Elias," *ME,* IV.
11 Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale Pa.
12 See article "Gelassenheit," *ME,* II.
13 Cf. Robert Friedmann, "The Christian Communism of the Hutterite Brethren," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte,* XLVI (1955), 196-208, and by the same, "The Hutterian Brethren and Community of Goods," in G. F. Hershberger, ed., *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision* (Scottdale, 1957), pp. 83-90.
14 Edition of 1920, page 19; in the present publication third paragraph of Introduction.
15 This publication, Section 5.
16 *Ibid.,* No. 15.
17 *Ibid.,* No. 4. "Meal of Community" stands for the German term "Gemeinschaftsmahl," another word for the Lord's Supper.
18 *Ibid.,* No. 9.

Pauline idea that the natural man in us has to die in order to make room for the spiritual man; our text speaks in this context metaphorically of the "new death."

Ehrenpreis was untiring in seeking to convince his brotherhood of the inescapable need for full community of goods if the church is to fulfill its purpose and goal, namely that of following Christ's command and to be a church of disciples. In letters and tracts he comes back to it again and again. The Brethren today still quote him as their authority, more than any other ancestral teacher.

Ehrenpreis also knew Menno Simons' *Foundation Book*.[19] He calls Menno "a wise, learned man," who came very close to the truth of perfection, meaning here the teaching of community of goods, yet somehow "failed" to draw the last consequences. Ehrenpreis then continues to muse: "had he demanded the fruits of life that are truly in keeping with love, he would surely have found fewer people to go with him. For it has always been only a few who have really dared to go this way."

II. The modern paraphrase. In the Germany of post-World War I the soil seemed to have been ready for a similar beginning to that in Moravia around 1530. Dr. Eberhard Arnold[20] (1883-1935), a strong leader in a radical Christian movement in Germany, who about 1920 sought to return to the ways of the primitive church, felt the urgent need of a community settlement on radical Christian foundations. Out of this small beginning grew the Rhön-Bruderhof near Fulda, in Central Germany, which was set up very similarly to a Hutterite Bruderhof in Moravia four centuries ago. It was only afterward, *ca* 1927, that Arnold heard of the Hutterites in America, in particular of Elder Elias Walter (the present writer was in part instrumental in this contact), and that he discovered he was standing unwittingly in a great historic tradition. It must have been then in 1927-1928 that Walter sent him the Ehrenpreis *Sendbrief* in its 1920 edition. Arnold, who was eager to build his growing Rhön-Bruderhof upon ever deeper foundations, was understandably captivated by this fine document. But for readers in modern Germany it was somewhat too long and perhaps also too filled with biblical illustrations; moreover it betrayed somehow its seventeenth century style and taste. So Arnold set himself to the task of rewriting the book and adapting it to the needs of the time, though strictly retaining the genius of the original. He condensed it drastically, using only pages 1-133, and

19 *Ibid.*, No. 16.

20 See article "Arnold, Eberhard," *ME* I, also the memorial number of *The Plough, The Quarterly of the Bruderhof Communities* (Woodcrest, Rifton, N.Y.), New Series, I, 3, Autumn of 1953.

omitting the last section of the *Sendbrief* called "Von Gott, Christus, Heiligem Geist und Göttlichem Wesen" (1920 edition pp. 133-154) since he felt that it was less concerned with communal life. He also cut out the entire appendix, which treats the plan of union between Hutterites and Swiss Brethren in 1557. The new version thus represented roughly not more than 43 per cent of the *Sendbrief* itself. A careful check has proved that Arnold did not deviate from the text, even though his version is a "paraphrase" rather than a merely edited text. If there is a point of regret it is the intentional omission of all biblical references, so abundant in the original, as was the custom with all Anabaptists. The Bible expert will quickly recognize all quotations and allusions, but the layman might have wished more support. In any case, in this fashion an almost contemporary work grew out of this old Hutterite stand-by. We do not go wrong in calling it in its new form not a "missive" (*Sendbrief*) as Ehrenpreis had done, but a "manifesto," a public declaration,[21] which sums up in briefest form the motives and arguments for this radical form of Christian living. As such the document is surprisingly fresh and "contemporaneous."[22]

In 1928, Eberhard Arnold published this new version in his magazine *Die Wegwarte* under the title "Andreas Ehrenpreis, Ein Sendbrief über brüderliche Gemeinschaft, das Höchste Gebot der Liebe betreffend. Neu ins heutige Deutsch in Kürzung übertragen." How effective this publication was we do not know. The Bruderhof in the Rhön was eventually dissolved (1937) by government order, and the group migrated to England and later to Paraguay. Renamed the Society of Brothers,[23] it took the old writing and had it translated into English. Since both they and the Hutterite brotherhood felt a need for an English publication of the Ehrenpreis programmatic epistle, the present writer was glad to receive this translation from the Brothers, even though it was not the original Ehrenpreis epistle itself. Thus from a purely historical viewpoint the document here published might lack somewhat the quality of an original source. But on the other hand, it has the significant advantage of being more in accord with our modern way of thinking, and yet faithful to the original. The following publication is undertaken with the full approval of the Hutterian Brethren in Canada (who first read the

21 Webster explains "manifesto" as a public declaration showing intentions and motives, also a statement of policy or opinion issued by a party or school.

22 Very close to this paraphrase by Eberhard Arnold is his speech which he delivered in Vienna in 1929, entitled "From Private Property to Community," and which was published in condensed form in *The Plough,* New Series, I, 3, Autumn of 1953, pp. 19-22.

23 See "Society of Brothers," *ME,* IV.

manuscript) and of course with the glad consent of the Society of Brothers.

An Epistle on Brotherly Community as the Highest Command of Love

There has been a great deal of writing and reporting lately concerning the idea of community of goods, but thus far it has not produced many visible results. Two obvious reasons account for this: communal life always requires both the leaving of our worldly goods and the surrender of self-will into genuine obedience. Without these steps perfection cannot be attained. Jesus showed the rich young man this way as the highest demand of love, as the door through which it is hard to go. And yet it must be so. It cannot be otherwise. Whoever will have the most precious jewel, the hidden treasure, must sell all that he has—everything—and give it in. This work of the Holy Spirit, powerful in its expression, was undeniably exemplified in the first church in Jerusalem. The first Christians had community; they sold their houses, lands and goods and laid the proceeds before the apostles. So no one could say of his goods that they belonged to him. No, they held everything in common. That is an undeniable fact. That is the light which shines through the world. That is the unconquerable city on the hill, which cannot be hid.

Now let us think of Jesus in His poverty and think that the disciple shall not be different from his master. Or let us think of sailors who come into danger with an overladen ship. They must lighten the ship and throw their merchandise overboard. How much more must we unload ourselves of our temporal possessions and our mortally dangerous self-will, when we are threatened by them with the sinking of true life.

But on this way that we speak of, these things are not to be thrown away and lost, but rather to be turned to use, for all is to be given to the poor and needy, and what is much more, to Jesus Christ the Lord, in order that they may bear fruit a hundredfold.

The story of Moses in which food fell from heaven points out how true equality and community is to be achieved. He who gathered much had nothing left over; he who gathered little had no less than the rest. The man who hangs on to even a small amount of property as his own private possession or self-will is no different or better than the very richest man. He is rich enough to be disobedient to the will of God. In these things are to be recognized the real characteristics of the true people of God. Jesus loved the comparison with sheep, doves, vines, because all of these by nature do not like to be alone, but always want to be together. However brightly a coal may glow, it will soon go out if it is alone. Hence the importance of coming together and gathering. Hence those who were called by Christ remained together after they had left parents and professions. That is what Jesus means with His comparison with the great banquet and the wedding of the king's son, when the servants were sent to call all the people together. And why did his anger fall on those who had first been invited? Because for love of their own households they preferred to stay away. Everywhere it is shown how hard it is for men in their present nature to put into practice the community by which the daily meals, morning, midday and evening, are always provided for the poor. Men hang and stick to property like caterpillars on a cabbage leaf. Self-will and selfishness stand in the way everywhere! How many are hindered and held back by it! Though they can speak so wonderfully in several languages yet they lack life because they have not love.

Where there is no community there is no true love. . . . True love lies in the growth of the whole organism in which all members are interdependent and one member helps another. That is the outward form of the inner working of the Spirit, the organism of the body governed by Christ. We see the same thing among the bees which all do their work of gathering with equal zeal, holding nothing back for the selfish needs of individual bees. They work all they can and live in community together. Not one of them keeps back any property for itself. If only love of property and self-will did not exist! If only we loved the life of poverty as Jesus showed it, if only we loved obedience to God as we love riches and outward respect! If only everything did not hang on self-will, then the truth of Christ's death would not appear as foolishness. Rather it would be God's power of salvation.

We see everywhere instances and examples, signs and pointers to true love and community. But it is quite a mistake when we are falsely accused that we make it a matter of compulsion to live in community. That is far from us. It is another who makes the demand and will have it so, but neither He nor we want to force anyone. Never! He who is not driven by love, and understanding should leave it alone. It is an urgent longing for enduring life and joy, it is fear of God's wrath that drives us and urges us to obedience to God. That is the source of community life. It is not we men. It is not our discovery. It cannot be our undertaking. Many of us have had livelihoods and property and strong self-will. We liked it all, too. We got on well enough in it. But love to Christ and to the poor drove us to that which we live for and confess to now. It was the recognition of God. So we found out the truth of the saying, "He who will have the one must let the other go." So we recognized as true that no one can obey two masters. One cannot belong at one and the same time to God and mammon.

Therefore it is a matter of decision of the will, not of compulsion. So among the Jews it is left to the will of the guest whether he will partake of the Passover or not. If not, he shall leave it alone. So Jesus points ever and again to the will. "He who will follow me, let him take upon himself the way of death." "Will you come to this life, then keep the commandments." And as a certain man did not want to, the Lord let him go his way.

To this will as Jesus would have it belongs joy, the great joy of him who has lost something of little value and found an inestimable treasure. Then in pure joy, without any compulsion, he sells what he has for the sake of the thing of great value. For him it is more than all the money, all the riches, all the property in the world. Therefore it is for men not to value highly that which is small and of little worth, but to leave it for the sake of that which alone is of lasting value. That is the greatest exchange we can make in life. Here is found the source of enduring health, enduring life, enduring, genuine joy. He who does not want to act of this good, innerly-surrendered will, who does not want to act for the sake of God and the poor, should leave it alone. It goes according to the old saying, "Either all mine or all his."

Many people are not completely without light and understanding only they do not want to step completely into the light. They hinder others from seeing the full light because they love wealth and property. With the recognition they have, they cannot possibly imagine that on the day of reckoning self-seeking will be justified and praised. But in order to beautify it they make the criticism that community living is an

endless source of dissent and strife, as if Christ the Lord, the apostles and the Holy Spirit were not aware of, or had not properly understood, what they brought into being as community. Perhaps they take the example of an unhappy marriage, where man and wife live together in disunity. Of them it is rightly said, "They love each other best when they are well away from one another." In a good marriage it is different. The one bears with the weakness of the other. Both bear joy and sorrow together as they come at different times. How much more does that apply to the new life of community in which a whole people of God bear with one another in love! Here all forgive each other everything. They do it for the good of one another. Never could they separate from one another because of human weaknesses. They do not desert one another. They know very well that Jesus turned sharply on Peter. We know of quarrels among the first disciples. Did they therefore desert one another? Could the unity of the Spirit be lost on this account? Or shall on this account the life of Christ and His apostles be despised or rejected? It is impossible. In this fact we recognize the reason why Christ, who is the Lord, insisted so much upon agreement and forgiveness.

There were plenty of troubles among the believers at the time of the early Christians. Was the unity of the Spirit lost on that account? The Church remained one in spite of that, that one Church to which one must listen if one will not remain outside. It would be very well if a people of God could live in uninterrupted peace completely without faults or blemishes or any hateful thing. But it is a human weakness that these disturbances can never cease to occur. One ought never, on account of such shortcomings and weaknesses, to reject a whole people. "One should not throw away the baby with the dirty bath water." He who wants to build for salvation and love and keeps his eyes on the Church will never be confused or hindered by these things. Urge and zeal drive us to a building up of a living building, to sacrifice in accordance with the Spirit. This sacrifice means that all property, the whole life of the body, must be given as a true service to God. One gives in one's whole self. So one comes to surrender. If a light is to burn it must consume itself. Only in that way can it give light. So we understand that Christ who is Lord became poor for our sakes. So it has to be as He said, "Sell all that you have and give to the poor." So we are able to understand why it was that Ananias who had kept back only a small part of his money for his own use in the future had to meet death along with his wife in so terrible a way.

What counts here is what a man does or has done to the least of his fellows. The Baptist,* who came before Jesus, had already said, "He who has two jackets should give to him who has none. And he who has food should do likewise." He who speaks of love to Christ and then refuses to give up his property to community for the sake of Christ proves by his actions that he loves the things of this world more than Christ. "Blessed are the poor who have given their goods for the sake of the poor." For the sake of the poor it should be done.

But what is of even greater significance is that on this way we become inwardly free, gathered and surrendered, unburdened and relaxed. For then our spirits hang on nothing more firmly than on our fellows in the faith, on the members of the communal life. The emphatic word of Jesus that we should not gather belongings on earth can never be made compatible with private property.

In place of working for oneself must come work for the others. Love does not seek its own advantage. Ever and again it is the question of

self-seeking that is referred to. Against it, every individual must seek with such constant zeal to serve the common need that he may produce and increase, if possible, a hundredfold. He who has worked loyally in this way with his modest strength will be entrusted with a great responsibility. What he has worked at will never leave him. Such work cannot be in vain. For it is work of love in the service of those who are devoted to God. Time and again we are directed to help to promote in every way possible the common interest. For the old adage says: Self-interest is bad interest; self-will belongs to hell.

That Which Seems Impossible Is Possible

Many thousands of people regard it as impossible to surrender and abandon all property and self-will. In contradiction to this, Christ stood before God. He knew that it was possible. He could command it. Historic examples stand as mighty proof of the actual possibility of this way. Abraham showed it to be possible when he left his rich homeland. And Moses was able to leave his comfortable court life. So we may not be surprised that it was possible for apostles of Jesus Christ to leave family and work, boat and net, indeed, everything they had. To his astonishment, Paul was also enabled to throw away good position, individual greatness, and high respect as if they were dirt. For Christ himself had proved something a thousand times greater. He had left the greatest to become poorer than the animals in their holes and the birds in their nests. These have their own place of rest. He had none. So He opened the new way on which He and His followers could hold to community of mutual property. The money was held by one on behalf of all. And furthermore, as Jesus had foretold, the Spirit of unity came with such power over this company that suddenly thousands found the will to community, in the face of which they could no longer have regard for their former possessions. They adopted just that attitude which now so many look upon as impossible.

The Fact of Community Life

From this time on there were in the course of the centuries many thousands who gave up completely not only in some cases a fine fortune, but also, what is much more, their self-will. Many of them came with empty hands to the Church which they had been searching for. For all the rest of their life they have remained thankful for it. And in this way many (very many) have come to us, the Hutterian Brothers, partly from other brotherhoods, particularly those in Switzerland. Many of them who had already been proclaiming the truth they had recognized, often in danger of their lives, brought with them whole companies. Most of them have borne testimony to the Word to the end of their lives. The Church sent them out time after time into different countries. Often they have had to pay for it with body and life. They were under threat of fire, water and sword. They testified courageously to the truth to their death. So this way of community has actually been realized. It has proved to be good and from God, as we can see in the first Church. She remained in community.

The Meal of Community

To this first gathering, the Lord's Supper as one loaf and one body, was given for uniting and community. Seed had to die for the unity of the loaf. Only in this way was it able to take root and grow in the field and withstand all the storms. Only in this way could it bear fruit. In the same way each individual must give himself up, must die to himself, if he

wants to follow Christ on his way. Then the grain must be crushed and milled if it is to be turned into bread. Our self-will undergoes the same for community. It must be broken if one is to belong to the community of the Supper and to the service of communal work. Furthermore: The grains had to be brought together into one flour and one loaf. Not one of them could preserve itself as it was or keep what it had. No grain could remain for itself. Every grain had given itself and its whole strength into the bread. In the same way the grapes must be pressed for the wine. Every grape gives all its strength and all its juice into the uniform wine. In it no grape can keep anything for itself. Only in this way does wine come into being. Grapes or grain that remain whole are only fit for the pigs or the muck heap. They have nothing to do with bread and wine. If they kept back strength and body for themselves they lost everything. And they remained lost. In this we have the most powerful picture of community. That is how Christ presented it to those who were with him at the Supper. But to continue: This whole loaf is broken as Christ let His body be broken. That means for us that the stubbornness of self-will is broken and that we must be ready in community to suffer and die. God himself brings it to that. For this He lets His strength break in upon us. That is what we ask of Him. His strength streams out on us as love, the love which is the fulfilment of all God's truth. As Christ has loved, so love reigns among us. His people are to be recognized by this. Only in this way is it possible to hold the Lord's Supper and community of the table. Everything one was or had, all strength and energy and property are given into the common stock. Like the loaf and the wine, all have become a unity. Therefore he who will be a brother, he who wishes to join in the breaking of the bread and in prayer, cannot refuse community. Never do we ask with Christ for my or thy bread. Our bread, our daily bread, we ask for, for the opposite of private property. When, on several occasions, Christ distributed bread, He gave always to many, to all, to each alike, no matter how small the supply was. He did not want to leave anyone out. So the small became great, the few became many.

Life in Community and Fulfilment of Love

Talk of faith and brotherliness does not fit a way of life in which one wears expensive clothes, lives well, and tries to become richer. Such a one saves and accumulates for himself and his kin. Brothers and companions in the faith have little or no chance to notice whether such a member or brother is still living or has died. How can one speak then of love to God, of love to one's neighbor? It is the desire for wealth that is at its destructive work here.

If community takes hold of us we cease to make demands. We have enough of the essentials in food and clothing. In other things between those who rightly call themselves brothers, there is a common recognition and agreement reached in faith as, for example, that it is the will of God to avoid war and weapons for once and for all. But here, in spite of the prophets and apostles, men fight and struggle against the clear truth. From the profits of our work nothing should be kept back. Everything that comes of our work should be put at the disposal of all the brothers. It is for the feeding, housing, and clothing of the poor, the hungry, and the old. It was through love that Jesus became poor and a member of the lowest class.

So He commands us as our Lord to love another in the same way as He loved us. That means that we make the co-citizens of His Kingdom fellow heirs of all our fortunes, that we accept one another as members

of the household of God, that we close neither our hearts nor our purses to any need of a brother. Only when this is so does God's love remain with us. Only in this way can love be genuine. Ungenuine love is not love at all. Genuine love gives all its goods and even its own body with undivided heart. That is the way to the light. That is community. Where there is no genuine love, there is no faith.

Where love to one's neighbor does not lead to community of goods we must not imagine that the blood of Christ frees us from sin. As love springs from faith, so also works spring from love. That almsgiving which is inseparably bound up with true life and real freedom from sin consists in nothing else but in the doing and giving of fervent love. Work for the overcoming of need and poverty must always come before property where there is active love. . . . Whoever acts contrary to this has no spark or drop of divine love. He who loves God must love all men who have their life from Him. If we really believe that all men have one God for their father, we cannot possibly seek to gain or to maintain an advantage over one of our brothers. If we are still seeking our own advantage, then love is extinguished in us and cold. We see the need and poverty of His children; we can help, but we do not do it, saying perhaps, "Should I give bread to people whom I do not know?" So we turn bad. We want to keep for ourselves what in reality has been robbed from others. We are happy we have got on in life. Those who have dropped behind on the way get nothing from us. Do not they need their share just as we do? This is where we lose sight of justice. It gets darker and darker around us because we cannot love our brother. The cries of the poor surround us like dark shadows; they have nothing and suffer lack while we have plenty, more than enough for the nicest things.

That is a matter of grave offense. The cries of pain of Christ surround us. How much Paul had to concern himself for the new order as already at that time among the Christians there were poor people who remained hungry while others had plenty. We must not forget: Apart from love, nothing can stand before God. That was the Gospel from the beginning. That is the source from which constantly anew there comes the rich power of the demand to let go of possessions and life for the brothers. We should not imagine that our lives are demanded only when we face the sword or some other bloody end. No. It is just as much our lives that are required of us in good times and in favorable circumstances. When we are able to do something, when we could have a good time, then we should give our lives for our neighbors. That is the moment when we should leave everything and yield ourselves up. Paul could do a great deal. But of all that he could do he wanted only what was for the good of all. So it is important to want the good of the others in contrast to one's own good. So I drop forever my own opinion, be it good or bad, if on account of it a brother may be lost. We lose the love of God if we close ourselves and our possessions in the face of our brother's need. For we should love, not with words, but with deeds and in truth. The love which comes to expression through us can be no other than that love in which God gave His Son.

The Vision of the Kingdom Leads to Community

Love to one's neighbor, the way of Jesus to His lordship, leads us to the rulership of His Kingdom. In comparison with this everything else is dirt and rubbish. When the life of joy streams out from this new city from this shining city-church, he who wants to hold on to his sensual

pleasure and property mania in the face of this coming world is a fool. His present life will soon be demanded of him. Then his heirs will quarrel over his estate. The worms have long been waiting for his body. So it is nothing but lack of vision that one is not ready to leave his worthless bit of wealth for the sake of the future fatherland. It is just as stupid as if a man will not exchange a poor grain of corn for a diamond or a bad earthenware jug for a golden dish. The only wise thing is free surrender, holding on to nothing. The only great thing is the loyal handing in of all one's goods. That is what God expects of every man without exception. It applies as much to the rich as to the poor. He who is loyal in this radical way with his bit of property will be entrusted with the stewardship of great things. He will judge and rule over the whole world and all its spirits. Such great things God has in store for men, if they will love.

Present need becomes extremely insignificant when compared with the shining lordship of God. It matters next to nothing. One cannot hold on to property when one stands before God. When it is a matter of members of His Kingdom, of companions of the faith, then there is an end of mine and thine. When a man has discovered these better possessions, he bears the loss of his goods with joy. They are fundamentally of little worth even though they are a great fortune. These better things are enduring and cause no fear. They give courage. He who lives in faith enters that wonderful land of God's rulership. Then thoughts cannot be restricted to little compartments. They are there where Christ is ruling with God. Therefore it cannot suffice to avoid the coarse evils. It is not on account of the most despicable sins that the man of self-will stays away from the wedding feast or the supper to which he is invited. It is for the sake of his field, his own work, his own yoke of oxen, his own life, his own business, that he stays away. It is for nothing else than the self-seeking which belongs to ordinary existence that he neglects and passes the common fellowship of the table by. Time and again for this reason alone he shows himself unfitted for the invitation. And yet the invitation was sent out to all.

Good Life Springs From Faith

The fig tree was not cursed on account of bad or poisonous fruit. It was condemned to wither away because it could bear good fruit and did not do so. Good must grow out of repentance and turning round. New life is not genuine if good does not come out of it. The Baptist* said what this good is: the giving up of the second coat and of food to him who needs them. Faith is seen as the fruit-bearing strength of living growth when a man gives food and drink and clothing to him who needs it, and still more, when he gives his working strength when he puts into practice love to the brothers and to all men, when in bearing the consequences of this service he is humble and understanding; that is, when he is not lazy and unproductive in his surrender. That is the fruit that God demands; that is the fruitfulness that is brought forth by brotherly love as the living sap of the new tree. In such a life, God and the church become greater than everything else. He who is not ready for this remains blind and unpurified. All talk of Christ remains fruitless talk and idle opinion as long as the thoughts and longings are concerned with personal aims belonging to the present condition of the world. Only faith which brings forth love opens the door to that other Kingdom in which Jesus is ruler. In this new life and Kingdom, Jesus leads the way as our Healer and Savior.

The Fulfilment of the Old Fasting and Sacrifice

In such a life everything is fulfilled that was said in the old covenant about almsgiving and fasting and those things that were still held in regard in later times. It is a question of the things one has to do without if one is to give bread to the hungry, receive the deserted into one's house, give clothing and protection to those who are cold. Through these services, light and health come into the house and into life. When one acts in this way one does not need the whole world, for one is concerned with God and His Kingdom. In fasting, as in sacrifice, it is not the cult or solemn ceremony; it is not in the fasting or in the sacrifice itself that one meets God. That is not the thing that could move Him. He does not want it. What He demands and what He will is the good: justice, love and good deeds. Through these things, thirst for the living God points to the salvation and healing which is in Jesus Christ. Then the heavens are rent. Then comes that which was to come. The people of old saw it from afar. The white-haired Simeon took it as a child in his arms and we seek it with joy and with all our heart as the great gift which can come from God alone. This is signified by the fact that God created man to walk upright with his head held up. Man should not be like the animals with their heads set towards the earth. He is not meant, like them, to go with his head hung in search of food. He belongs to the whole and to the Kingdom.

With this the believing man steps into a new life. To his previous life he has gone to sleep or even died. All his members which point him towards the earth are killed. Love for property and clinging to possessions have withered away with them. The mania of avarice hangs on men like a lead weight pulling them downwards. Only dead men are never to be found again in their own houses. Only buried men are never to be seen again on their own land or in their accustomed place in the inn. The dead man has left behind his wealth and property. After death no man's wealth, house, money, or goods belongs to him any more. So we understand the truth of the saying that we must have died to the present world. Being dead we are no longer to be found in our property. As regards self-will and desire for possessions we are no longer living at all. To walk with God means to sacrifice oneself as Christ did. To give body and life means much more, not less, than to leave goods and chattels. Out of this death-strength we maintain a new order in a united household. Like children who are held in equal regard by their parents, we live in community and share our food and all our goods. Our previous way of life lies behind us just as if we were dead.

Desire for Property One of the Worst Evils

Whatever separates from the Kingdom of God or has no part in His realm is to be recognized as vice and publicly condemned. Before God, every form of greed belongs to the same category as fornication and all other impurity. But very few realize that the apostles were right in this judgment. They put both things together on one level—love of money and adultery; to them, both are guilt and sin, poison and weeds. But most men are blind to this, because they cling to it with all their strength. With the rich this is plainly to be seen. With the poor it is only the means and the opportunity that are lacking to do the same as the rich. According to their will and desire they are nearly all like the rich. We must not be deceived by any amount of decrying the avarice of the rich on their part; they are no better themselves. Many of them boast that they are

miserly whilst they are full of the devil of drinking and the demon of extravagance. With their drunken breath they give proof of their raging covetousness. How much they would like to have plenty of money in their pockets to satisfy their greed.

Passion for money is the root of all evil just as much for the miserly as for those who spend for pleasure, and those who love property should never forget that greed is in essence nothing but idolatry. For men cling to it as they should cling to God. They are dependent on money as they should be dependent on God. Their idols are silver and gold. Therefore a man cannot come near to the Kingdom of God who is in idolatry or impure passion or love of money. To such a one, Christ the Lord with His realm is hard and inaccessible. He who knows this gives his goods to the poor that they may bear results a hundredfold; if he acts otherwise, everything will be taken from him.

Why Christ Wants to Have the Poor

He who is settled in riches and property refuses the call of the Kingdom. He does not want to listen. He does not want to come. God calls the poor because the rich do not want to come. If the lords and nobles and business magnates do not want it, the royal joy of freedom and community is offered to the humble and enslaved. God gives it to the simplest of the simple. He would as little refuse or exclude the high, the great and the influential if only they would become simple enough to want to come. All should come. None are to be rejected. That which heals and enriches has appeared for all men. That sounds agreeable to the ears; but nevertheless it is not wanted because this other thing belongs with it—that we give up and leave everything which does not conform to the nature of God. That is the covetous will of the present world. From the beginning it has struggled against the recognition of the truth. "Is this voice really from God?" Clever and great people will not believe it. They reject love. God calling them repeatedly wants to gather them under the protecting strength of His love. He wants. They do not. This is what Jesus said.

They do not want to follow His call and action. Thus they force Him to sharper weapons; He had to speak to them in His hardest words. Poor people listened to Him. Many of them went with Him. Rich and great men caused Him pain. So it came about that He had to utter the threefold woe, woe to their riches, their self-satisfaction, their laughter, woe to their influence and popularity. But still they should not be excluded. Christ brings His reconciliation and atonement to the whole world. But it will be very hard for the rich to overcome themselves. It will be very hard for them to leave riches, goods and self-will. It will be a very hard step for them to learn obedience and to start with community. It will hard for them to enter into the Kingdom of God. What is deterring them is clear. The new covenant does not lead through good days, it does not lead through rich lands. The history of the old covenant has shown that all the silver and gold, all the wealth of horses and chariots had filled the country with idols and sin. Prophets of poverty and need proclaimed again and again an end of this corruption. Good days have never been good for men.

Therefore God makes a new covenant, a completely new one. But its gallows and poverty, its misery and contempt are so hard for us men that again and again we think this new way is impossible. Therefore the Son had to go as the first upon this impossible way. From now on

nobody was able to reject it as impossible, for it had been trodden. From now on a leader and champion of the faith was there who had trodden the way to the end in poverty and contempt. The end could not be anything but the extreme of this way, execution as a criminal. As Lazarus had to remain to the very end in poverty and misery, as Joseph and Job had to undergo oppressive poverty, so the new covenant signifies that we have to remain firm to the end in most oppressive need. In it, however we shall find the greatest and most exalting joy.

This Way Allows no Softening

To pamper oneself with soft and delicate clothing is not to be tolerated. On this road one has to tread in many a dirty puddle. Pampering and indulging oneself only belong to property, riches and sensuality. They do not belong to the way of poverty. As with Jesus, this way leads to the severe suffering of hardest death. Luxury must be left to princes' courts and their vermin. All forms of superfluity belong to places of luxury and hypocrisy. Excessive eating and drinking are forms of this same soft yielding to things that are unnecessary in life. We call it all worthless weakness. The austere life of John the Baptist with its poverty of clothing and food was evident before the eyes of all. Only in this way was he able to demand that men share everything with their fellows and to proclaim fire and destruction to all the unfruitful chaff. Nobody can teach the mass way of full covetousness if he wants to call himself a believer or a brother. We must not come anywhere near the mistaken idea that it is not necessary to enter a life of community and full surrender. It is an abuse of the Scriptures in the service of a completely foreign doctrine to try to make the hard truth acceptable and comfortable for the rich; this is indeed utterly impossible. We need a strict impartiality in our vision. Only with this are we able to recognize the way of truth, the clear direction of the divine Word. What was revealed in the first church in Jerusalem in fulfillment of the Spirit is plain in the whole Scripture.

Against the Defense of Property

In opposition to this guidance of the Holy Spirit, to the clear promises of God which carry their power within them, and to all those who follow these things, the strong ruler Mammon again and again employs lovers of property in his work of veiling and distorting. He gets them to justify with pious words their disorderly way of life and their possession of money. But he often makes a mistake in his choice of words. To his own shame he cites the case of the false apostle Simon in his own favor. Simon was cursed, like Judas Iscariot, Ananias and Saphira—with all his money. Certainly one can quote Paul as calling the rich of this world to give with glad hearts and to use their money properly. Certainly one can emphasize that John the Baptist to begin with speaks only of the first step in the new life as to do no man violence or injustice. Certainly with Paul again one can stress that he let carnal men who were still at the child stage put aside money for the church at Jerusalem which lived in community. In all these and in other cases it is a matter of transitory stages which had to be overcome from within.

Instead, however, of trying with these pious arguments to provide a certain justification of private property, these men should rather say quite openly that they wish to retain and uphold the attitude of life of the whole world. They want to follow it even though property leads to servitude. They want to hold on to it even though life in community would

bring freedom and spiritual life. In any case Jesus simply and plainly rejected property. He who will go with Him can retain nothing for himself. If the communal property is cited in defense of private property, the answer is that what belongs to the community is not mine and is not thine. Common property excludes private property. Life in community means the contribution of life and all working strength to the service of all. The door stands open. Come out of your private nests! Out of your private houses! Away with looking after your own affairs! Away with self-will! Sell everything! Give to them who have no property! Come, come, follow Me! Forswear all you have, then you can be My disciple. Will you really follow Me? Then give up yourself. Leave your goods and chattels; let go of yourself. Follow Me. I have nothing of My own. I have not even a place to lie down and rest Will you not come because of your field, or your work or your household? Do you hold on to those little things? Do you love your own way and property so much? Then, of course, you cannot sit at the table of My community. You do not fit in with Me.

So Christ speaks to those who are hindered by ideas that rule the whole world. Their life cannot become fruitful. To lighten themselves they take counsel with the many others who also hold on to their own nests and would so much like to be Christians and keep their property. They want to stand up for propetry. Therefore they must despise community. And therefore through their attitude they are forced to neglect and to despise the clear way of Christ, His perfect order, and with it His truth and His life. So it comes about that the Word which has already been active within them disappears from their heart. And their heart is turned away from faith. And they turn again to seek their own food. They refuse to put their fields and houses at the disposal of all. They become like moles and foxes that depreciate and undermine the communal plantations. And still many feel within themselves that they cannot repudiate the fact of love when in deeds which speak for themselves it brings into being the life of community. In the depths of their beings they recognize this fact as good and necessary but what never seems to come is the right moment, the favorable opportunity. First there is one hindrance, then another. So it never comes to the erecting of the communal building to serve the house of the Lord. The right time always seems to be there to continue the old life in the old houses. The true reason lies deep. What they love most is not God, but holding on to their things. They have still far to go.

The Test of Loyalty for the Surrender of Faith

There are many who have given up this or that form of injustice but who remain in other respects utterly involved in injustice. Of the maidens who went to meet the bridegroom, five had to remain outside—the flames of their festive lamps were not burning. It was not sufficient. Their faithfulness was extinguished. Of the trusted servants whom the man put in charge of his goods, one had to be sent away for the same reason—lack of faithfulness. In the flock of animals all of which we think are clean, the goats will finally be separated from the sheep. The same dividing is happening here. The doors are open. They want to come in. The only things that count are faithfulness and truth. Not pious words but only the willing deed of faith belongs to the new realm. However finely one is able to talk about all kinds of worship, it remains uncertain slippery ground. For the way of action and surrender is not wanted. It is not

dared. It demands too much, unconditional faithfulness in leaving behind and giving up everything. Riches and a life of pleasure are murderous slippery ground, on which everything is bound to collapse. The day of testing is approaching. Everything will melt and break like ice. Then it will be evident what kind of life has been led. No good deed has been done to Jesus. His word has not been kept. He has not been truly loved. And therefore they also who belonged to Him could not be loved. In the face of this fact all questioning and excusing is useless. One is rejected.

The all-divisive refining fire has been avoided. This fire could have proved in good time whether there was real gold there or whether all supposed faith was only an illusion. Surrender is the name of this intense fire in which alone these things can be decided. In it all other metals and dross are parted with. They are taken out, disposed of, set aside. What remains is pure gold alone, faith and love which is of faith. One leaves behind everything else that one had. Here God and Mammon can no longer remain alloyed together. That is the test of faith which the rich young ruler, Ananias and Sapphira and many thousands of others had to undergo. It was shown in this test of fire which they preferred; their pious self-will and property or Christ in every fellow-man. This furnace burns away all the hindrances. The same thing happens in it as with the needle's eye or the narrow gate. Nothing gets through that we have been dragging along with us. Fire is needed if gold is to be proved.

Everyone has to go through this test. It was so from the beginning. When the earth was created, God saw that everything was good after its kind. Only of man He did not say that he was good. Rather He set him a test in order to see whether he would be good or bad. In this test man first made himself known; he chose the wrong. Abraham also had to undergo this test in the sharpest way. The same thing happened to the people called out of rich Egypt and led into the desert. Poverty was the test. The prohibition of certain meats belongs to this also. Still clearer is the character of this trial with Job. Always at the point where something has become dearest to a man, God steps in. Through Jesus God strikes at the same self-will harder than ever before. Whoever goes with Him into this trial has the greatest responsibility. He is charged with it—after he has left house, relatives and goods, for Christ's sake. But whoever loves any of these things more than Him does not fit in with Him. It is love, the decision of love springing from faith, which is the furnace of surrender. That which remains behind as purified gold is the love of God, which is the only thing that belongs to His Kingdom.

Love of Work Versus Greed, Profit and Interest

God wants us to love the poor. In no other way can this love work out better than in Christian community. Energy and industry applied in productive work supplies the poor and neglected with that basis of life which they need. Through this work food can be provided and the table spread for them three times a day. This is possible here though we possess nothing for ourselves. Through this service people are enabled to live who would otherwise have to beg from door to door, or would die of misery and starvation. All who live in this community do this for love alone; for Christ's sake and the sake of the poor. It is a matter of love and friendship and brotherhood; in the first place love and friendship towards fellows in the faith. Only a joyful will performs this work in the service of others. Here no profit earning is sought, even less interest and usury. Such things are out of the question. After all, in the new covenant prop-

erty, self-interest and avarice are branded as wrongs and vices. But just as with pride, so also with these sins, the resisting will stands in the way of recognition. But greed stands out so plainly that one can grasp it with one's hand; it makes the one rich and the other poor. The one could help the other but he does not do it. That is avarice. But there is another form of money-loving which turns out to be just as avaricious, according to which money is lent from rich funds to poor fellows in the faith on interest and usury, in order thereby to become a little richer. Where are love and brotherhood to be seen in this? Where is conscience? How are we to recognize from this that they are Christians? For surely, love is the sign of discipleship.

How Near One May Be to the Light and Not Completely Dare It

Johann Arndt was a highly enlightened man, respected by his own people and despised by many others as a heretic. He wrote very much that was good and true about Christian thought and life. But he did not step forward to represent that the perfect and highest word of love must be carried out in community or mutual help. He comes very near to the mark in his book of homilies,[24] for example, when he says of the apostles that they had to leave everything and disclaim everything that they had, that they had even to give themselves up, when they were to receive the Spirit descending from above. This was the true discipleship of Christ upon which the true light followed. Johann Arndt saw that. If he had stepped out in this direction in full honesty instead of holding back, he and his followers would have come into great danger, for there never was place or time in which a people of the church living together could have arisen if they had proclaimed the truth in full daylight. Whenever a true spark of the light has tried to show itself, it has been attacked with persecution and annihilation. In this way the light of truth has always been suppressed and kept silent. It has been attacked with fire and sword whenever it has tried to shine. With tyranny, torture, and execution, they hastened to exterminate it. The truth is the more dangerous the nearer one approaches to it. Menno Simons himself slid past very carefully a little to one side of truth. In his "Foundation" he has testified earnestly and zealously to some essential things of the Christian faith. He came very close indeed to the truth about perfection. He condemned greed, ostentation, pride and such like with strong words. But he never dealt clearly with the decisive choice placed before the rich young ruler or the powerful great work of the first church in Jerusalem, although he knew that it had its origin in nothing else than the mighty instigation of the Holy Spirit. In it, the leaving of possessions and community of goods were all too clearly testified, particularly before Ananias and Sapphira. Menno's writings point in this direction with many forceful exhortations. He severely censures the lust for money and the increasing of the fortunes of the rich. He seems to have had no reserve in laying bar the mercilessness with which they oppress the poor and leave them in their misery. He used the sharpest words against the whole wide world and its shameful profits. But in singling out for these attacks always the world and the parsons, the monks and secular people, he lulled to sleep his own fellows in the faith. Many of them were living in the same wealthy ostentation and disorder. Many oppressed their poorer fellows in the faith instead of really helping them. The "Foundation" finds particularly those guilty who extol this writing of Menno Simons and at the same time console the rich Mennonites. Had Menno Simons demanded the fruits of life that are

24 Johannes Arndt, *Hauspostille* (1608), Vorrede.

truly in keeping with love, he would surely have found fewer people to go with him. For it has always been only a few who have really dared to take this road.

The Establishing of Community by the Hutterian Brothers

In these most dangerous times people of faith discovered one another again at last. They knew the Scriptures and were conversant with the languages. The light was lit for them. They came forward. They testified sincerely to the truth. They offered to talk these things over with learned scholars. For they were ready to have a member torn from their body for every false conviction that could be proved against them. They took up the true work with strength from on high. It was the strength of almighty God in which they worked powerfully and earnestly. God's working is stronger than words can express. Therefore they fought their fight with endurance and honor—unto death. For they wore the armor that is appropriate for this fight. They had received the golden sword. They stood in the faith of Jesus Christ, without yielding. Many of them gave goods and property and also body and life. For the banner of blood and strife of the great sovereign Jesus Christ went before them. They followed it. His royal highway was their road. We should follow their faith. They prepared the way. They dared to undertake that unique work in the strength of almighty God. They did it for community as the work of perfect love. They began it for the sake of the community of all believers. They maintained it against the open abyss of the raging depths. They carried it through against all the doubts that considered it impossible. They achieved in it a complete order in accordance with Christ. In spite of persecution the work grew. At various times we had twenty and more households or Bruderhofs. They were situated in different towns, market centers and villages. Often there would be from three to four hundred in one household, sometimes even as many as six hundred. These hundreds of people had a common kitchen, common bakehouse, common dining room, common school, common maternity house and baby nursery. In every such household there was only one steward or householder. He bought with the money that came from all work and other sources everything that was needed; grain, wine, wool, hemp, salt, cattle, or whatever. This one member distributed everything according to need for everyone in the house, children and adults. For the school children, the mothers with newborn babies for whom six weeks are allowed, for any others with special needs, extra food is provided separately. Everybody else goes to the common dining room to the common meal. Particular sisters are appointed to care for the sick, bring them food and nurse them. The gray haired, the old people, sit at a particular table and are offered something more than the younger and stronger ones have. To each is to be given according to his need, as far as can be supplied. The communities ordered in this way have continued uninterruptedly for well over a hundred years. This was only possible through God the Lord. It was not easy. We have gone through very hard times. We have often been thrown into direct poverty through plundering and burning. We have suffered much damage through the great wars. A few households were completely annihilated with all their property and stores. But we came together again time after time. Time after time another suitable place was found. Then we would receive there all those who had been persecuted and driven out. We have borne with one another and suffered together in great poverty as well as we were able. There were also better times when we were able to make a

living. But in the bad times everything belonging to the whole church had to be used up. All that had been built up during the good times and set aside for harder times had to be used up. We could well have used a thousand times over the large quantity of supplies that were stolen from us by Francis, Cardinal von Dietrichstein. They were not superfluous. Genuine considerations of brotherly responsibility to care for the needs of the whole church had motivated us. In this spirit, time and again, we have used up all that we had left when we were driven out of our houses and homes and had to pass through times of persecution. This happened repeatedly for the sake of the faith of Christ Jesus. Ever and again we had to set out on our wanderings with all the little children and many who were sick. At those times particularly we held together. We could not possibly abandon the weakest and oldest in such need. We cared for them to the best of our ability and did all we possibly could for them. We stood by one another as brothers and sisters should. And God was standing by our side. That alone enabled us to hold the field. That alone enabled us to grow. Many times numerous upright men, women, and young people came to us, often having left stately homes or big farms, but above all their own strong self-will coupled sometimes with public offices commanding high respect. They came to us partly from other brotherhoods. They have maintained to their death as godly truth that community is a high necessity. We need not be surprised that many lies and accusations were leveled against such a remarkable fact. It was the same with Christ and the apostles. It will remain so until the end of the world.

Concerning the Preliminary and the Final Entry into the Brotherhood and the Giving up of Property with These Steps

A great deal belongs to the establishing of such a work. After all, we are concerned with the cause of Him who is our Lord. One must be clear beforehand what it will cost! It ought not to happen, as has occurred a number of times, that people come in a quick blaze of enthusiasm wanting to take part, whose will, however, proves to be insufficiently grounded and cannot carry them through. In the course of time they find that they cannot submit to the necessary orders that arise from the spirit of Christ. Sooner or later their courage and zeal flag. They become deserters. They leave the path. There is quarrel and trouble with them. The struggles are most difficult with those who fall away after giving a considerable property, at the time with clear goodwill. And now they demand it back. They want to have it again for themselves. For this reason we accept nothing irrevocably in the first place from one who wants to join our brotherhood. To begin with, a sufficient time is given to him in which to become acquainted with the message we proclaim and to experience for himself our manner of working and way of life. Therefore we put aside for a time what he brings with him into the community, for himself or for the common cause. If, later on, the community life no longer appeals to him, he can go his way. Then he is given back willingly what belonged to him before, to the last half-penny. He is at liberty to go where he sees the best opportunity for himself and his life. But if after this time of testing he recognizes the truth and has really experienced the rightness of it, and he then gives himself of his own free will to baptism, he is received into membership of the community life. If at the time of his first coming to our life he has given in something to be stored, it is now laid before him. Whether it was little or much it is given again into his hands. Now he can give it to the church. For that is as it should be. Now it is accepted. Now

the poor and needy can benefit from it. It is used for whatever is needed. But now, if it should ever happen that he later turns away, that, in contradiction to the final step he has taken, he should later demand to have back what had belonged previously to him, then we can give nothing back to him. He did not hand it in in order that it might later be given back to him! Before God and in all justice we owe him nothing. Our attitude to him has been that which we have just described. What a man gives in the morning is no longer his in the afternoon. Therefore each time before a person is received into membership all this is said to him. Certainly as things are at the moment with us, this is hardly necessary. Poverty is too great. All who come to us must be given what they need from the very first day. In this very respect we are often spoken badly of. Many people even among the Swiss Brethren reject this justice which is valid before God, although it is required of all believers. They only counter it with spurious arguments. On the day of the Lord, when His judgment comes, all lovers of property will have to recognize the truth. Then they will recognize wealth for the murderous weed that it is. Then they will see that it has choked in them the living seed, so that this seed is unable to bear fruit in life.

Of Obedience

The deepest root of this injurious weed, certainly, is not the external element of property. It is rather the self-will and obstinacy, anchored in the wilful heart, the will of the ego which is directed against the will of community. He who is accepted into our communal life has to show obedience in his whole life. It is not only a matter of leaving goods and chattels. It goes deeper than that: to enter into discipleship through obedience. In obedience one has to submit and to subordinate oneself to the church. One has to be willing in the service of the church to do any work of which one is deemed capable. If one first surrenders oneself to Christ who is the Lord, one gives oneself to the will of God. With this, however, one has given oneself to the church and to us. This is what the New Testament says. This means real sacrifice, in that one surrenders one's life. Christ the Lord himself went so far with His apostles and disciples. Obedience was the thing He commanded them. Wherever He sent them they went, even if it cost them their lives. Like defenseless creatures He sent them into the midst of beasts of prey. They should also be subordinate and obedient to men—in so far as He had appointed them. He who listens to them listens to Him, and finally to Him from whom He has His mission. When the prophets speak of the future of God: that from all the wildernesses of this world men who are like beasts of prey shall become capable of living together in community, that wolf-like creatures shall go with lamb-like creatures, that a little child shall be able to lead them all—if all this is to be, then a definite order and obedience must be established. Otherwise a people cannot live together as a people of God. Because of this the apostles speak of obedience to those who walk before us. We have to subordinate ourselves to them, because they have to give account for our lives. He who esteems them lower, esteems God himself lower! For He has given His Spirit into them. When Moses called together the people known as the company of Korah, they declared "We do not come." And this disobedience was their downfall. Paul emphasizes most strongly, "Have nothing to do with him who does not want to obey our words." And further: the young men should submit themselves to the elder. And more than that: all, all should submit to one another; and more significant still is the reason given for this command; he who thinks highly of

himself meets with God's resistance: he who holds to the lowliest, knowing his own littleness, will be given great gifts. In the old covenant this attitude led to the harsh words, "Where thou sendest us we will go." "He who is disobedient to the word must die."[25] All the believers have to be led to the good will of subordination. It is in this submission that we deny the devil and self-will. You no longer belong to yourselves. Nobody belongs to himself. He must do whatever he is meant to do. This vocation comes to us through men who are called. Paul expects obedience even in his absence. He claims God as his authority for this. God works through him on will and deed. God it is who brings about both the willing and the accomplishing of good. In the church of the Lord, zeal and obedience as the working of the Spirit are needed constantly in every part. Everyone does joyfully and with a good will what he is asked to do. He hates and turns from his own will. Obedience takes the place of ritual sacrifices. Disobedience is disbelief, and arises out of it. Disobedience is demonic sorcery,[26] nothing but the selfish ends of self-will. Prayers to God and the forms used for them in which men so often seek to strengthen their own self-will raise disobedience to the level of worship of the idol, or sorcery of the worst kind. He, therefore, who regards as unnecessary and rejects the words of God and Christ which command obedience has good cause to fear the day of judgment.

Discipline and Purification of the Communal Life

The bond of love keeps itself pure and intact by the most definite guidance of the Holy Spirit. Nobody must be allowed to get into it who is a carrier of infectious vices. This being together all of one heart and soul excludes from the community all who are not of the unanimous spirit. Man is by nature inclined to sin. To keep a people of God pure it is highly necessary that order and discipline are maintained through the exercise of clearly graded measures of discipline. Evil has to be warded off. The coarser vices have to be publicly unmasked before all other members of the community. This is the only way to put men to shame for the worst sins and to sharpen the conscience. In case of hardened obstinacy the extreme step, separation, becomes unavoidable. Otherwise the whole community would be dragged into the wrong and would make itself a party to it. If a ban lies on a communal life, the ban must be lifted. Otherwise God's spirit cannot be with us; He does not mix with the rulership of other spirits. Paul says therefore, "Drive out the wicked person from among you." This command should not be carelessly kept. Instead of the blood judgment of worldly law courts, with which we have nothing to do, we need the discipline of the church. This discipline shows itself in smaller issues as simply brotherly admonition. If one has acted wrongly toward another without having committed gross sin, an address of rebuke and warning is sufficient. But if this rebuke is obstinately withstood, if the brotherly correction of well-meant advice is not accepted, then even these smaller things have to be brought openly before the church. If the one in question listens then and allows himself to be put right, a way will be found to put things right again. The thing will be cleared out of the way. If his stubbornness still does not give way and he will not even listen to the church, then there is only one thing to be done in this situation too, to cut him off and shut him out. It is better that the one poison-bearing member is cut off than that the whole church is lead astray or polluted. The aim of the discipline and warning, however, is not this exclusion, but

25 Ex. 17:12; Joshua 1:16, 18. 26. I Sam. 15:22, 23.

improvement. It is not undertaken for his ruin, even in a case of the coarsest and most serious offenses, even in a case of besmirching impurities which make the man utterly guilty before God. For the sake of example and warning the truth must in this case be declared publicly and the matter cleared up before the church. In this situation, too, the person concerned should not depart from his hope and his faith. He should not go away and leave everything but should accept and bear what is put upon him by the church. He should earnestly repent no matter how many tears it may cost him. All those who know themselves to be dedicated to the church intercede in due time for him when he repents and all heaven rejoices. After genuine earnest repentance he is received back anew before the whole church with great joy. All plead unanimously for him that his wrongdoings may never be thought of again, that they may be forgiven and cleared away forever. For this Christ gave His apostles authority and power. What they bind is bound and what they loose is loosed. So Christ gave them His breath and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Upon whomever you leave them, on him they remain. All that means for those who refrain from their evil ways a great joy, a joy which leads to life. Everyone who enters our bond, everyone who is to be incorporated into the communal life, promises to do all that has been said here and to take it upon himself. He promises that he will accept at all times brotherly admonition and discipline for himself. He promises that he for his part will also make use of brotherly warning and discipline where it is necessary and called for.

Concerning Mission into Other Lands

In the Holy Scriptures you have a clear recognition concerning true baptism and the Lord's Supper, concerning the great gift of redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are of one mind and one opinion in this as is clearly enough expressed in the book of the Five Articles.[27] The spreading of the Gospel lies very much upon our hearts. Before the hard time of war, we carried out the mission task energetically. The command of Christ and the ceaseless carrying out of this command by the apostles has urged us throughout the years to send messengers into countries both near and far. They are to stretch out the hand to those who are full of glowing zeal and they are to gather together for God all those who belong to him. The Lord himself sent out His twelve apostles to spread the truth. And He also sent out the seventy, always two by two. The work is great. It is a great harvest. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out His workers. It is His last command that His disciples should go out. Go into all the wide world, proclaim the message of joy in the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. To us the whole work of faith is without doubt completely clear. It is in the questions of conduct in daily life that we do not feel ourselves to be perfect. But also in these things we exert all our whole strength in order to come nearer to the goal. Concerning the basis, the truth of the divine light, the recognition which we have, there we feel in our innermost heart that we are firmly secured, secured in all simplicity, that what we teach is the right intent and true meaning, the basis and foundation of the apostles and Prophets. In everything Jesus Christ is the decisive foundation stone. We know that nobody can lay any other foundation. There is but one. It is Jesus Christ. And no matter how many opponents might rise up against him with great power and might, the Lamb shall overcome. Babel will fall.

27 See note 1 above.

Concerning Education of the Children and Youth, Employment Outside the Community, and Marriage

For all these things separation from the world is necessary. That applies in a particular way to the education of the children which concerns us greatly as a most necessary and important matter. We must be constantly seeking in all seriousness to find the best ways of education. Not only in the later years of youth but also from the earliest time of childhood the damaged element in human nature is active. From the beginning it starts to grow. We can compare it with iron that tends to rust, or soil that encourages weeds to grow. Only with constant care can they be kept clean. It is a fact: the children of men from their youth up love all kinds of unrighteousness. They have within them the covetous will and the tendency to selfish desires. That comes most strongly to expression when children have bad examples before them every day, which harm them. With their inborn propensity for imitation they will always follow these things. In this way the desire grows in them to do everything in imitation of what they see. In the end it will no longer be possible to combat their rottenness. If one tries to do so, they will do what they want to do secretly—as often as they are exposed to such bad company. To this state of affairs must be added the fact that many parents are naturally soft with their own children. They have not the strength seriously to counter the wrong in them. Therefore there is double cause, indeed thousandfold cause, to seek Christian community for the children and to keep them in its clear separation. In this point particularly we see the great significance of seclusion. In this way it can be prevented that ungodly children bring shame upon honest and otherwise good people. The burden of their shame falls on the parents, for it is they who have or ought to have educated their children. If the children do fall into bad ways, into pride and arrogance, drunkenness, loose living, or other unrighteousness, then as long as the children live it will be said of the parents that they brought up their children to their own dishonor and shame. They neglected discipline. This bad name will follow father and mother to their grave. When nothing but their bones remains, this bad outcome of the wrong upbringing of their children will be on people's lips. God himself sees it in the same way. He let the whole generation of Eli be destroyed because the latter, himself blameless in his own life, had neglected to discipline his sons. The heaviest weight is the fate of the children themselves who have gone to ruin, for their life and blood are on our heads. The right education and upbringing of the children as we practice it in our households has proved itself as absolutely necessary.

As a result of poverty there arises another trouble in the guiding of the youth. Many who know the good way and try to follow it give their own flesh and blood into the service of men who have no faith. It even happens in this way that children are allowed to work in public houses and road houses. Children are the highest and most beloved, the foremost and best of all that is entrusted to us. We must look after them with holy care. We shall have to account for what has become of them on the great day of the Lord. That applies also to those who want their children to get on in life. They hand them over to the world in order that they may learn and get to know the things that are important in the world. The result has often been that children led in this way have turned away from the faith of their parents. So light is the regard for the welfare of the young people! So little importance is placed on it that these very young people are put defenseless before beasts of prey. They are actually

pushed toward their destruction. They are delivered to the influence of the worst ungodly examples which are bound to do them harm. Who can answer for that before God? The Holy Scriptures and the light of our own consciences must surely hold us back from this. Menno Simons appeals to us in this regard in his book "Foundations": Parents who live with God would rather see their children burned at the stake or brought into outward misfortune of the worst kind than let them be educated in the pomp and show of the world. When they take up life and marry into such circumstances they sink into a far worse destruction than poverty, sickness, and death can bring. All the saints call to us to separate ourselves from the world. Far be it from us to enmesh ourselves or mix ourselves up in it. Therefore we confess openly that this disaster must be avoided with utmost care—let men ridicule and slander us as much as they will. So infinitely much depends on this: the salvation of men and their continuing life.

In the light of divine order it is a dirty stain, a serious fault when marriage is permitted between believers and unbelievers. From such a marriage injustice and evil circumstances of all kinds arise, trouble and pain, confusion and distraction, disorder and apostasy. Such a marriage is contrary to the most definite word of the Lord, "If you marry strange people you will go to ruin. You shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons."[28]

Ezra ordered all alien women and children, all alien sons and daughters to be cast out. In this question as in all others the attempt is made to disguise the true position with empty high-flown excuses. Certainly a marriage which already exists should not be separated when the partners are able to live together without damage to the faith. But Paul never said that believers and unbelievers should take one another in marriage. Happiness never came from a mixed marriage undertaken in this way. God always hated it. Therefore where leaders of Christian bodies permit the step of entering into such a mixed marriage, they cannot belong to a pure clear church. Christ did not even permit one to go to bury his father or another to say good-bye to his previous companions. How much less, then, could he have permitted a union which has such serious consequences. It is disorder! Among many other results, it leads to inheritances following the death of the parents being withheld from the poor. On account of these estates there is always tearing and biting, invariably to the advantage of the unbelievers. That must never be permitted. We should not give away our father's inheritance. In this again it is clear: Such a wrong path can only be followed when love is too weak, when community, order, and true obedience no longer hold sway, when each one does as he will, particularly with his own property. Then again the old proverb comes into its own: "If you slip on the top step of the stairs, you fall down the whole flight."

28 Deut. 7:3.

* Ehrenpreis erroneously puts into the mouth of John the Baptist words taken from the Sermon on the Mount (pp. 527 and 261).

THE MENNONITE WITNESS IN AN URBAN WORLD

LELAND HARDER*

Let me begin by disclaiming any intent or ability to solve some of the specific questions of strategy and tactics which Mennonite city pastors are asking. In a previous paper[1] I attempted to speak in a general way to four such questions, which I listed as follows: (1) Do we feel that our new urban churches ought to serve primarily their own local community, or not? (2) To what extent is the church extension strategy developed and perfected by the major denominations relevant for us in our situation? (3) What sequence should be followed in starting a new church? (4) To what extent is promise of success a criterion for decision in our church extension?

I fear that the very asking of these questions may indicate a certain drift in our point of view; and it is with the hope of examining basic premises that I turn on this occasion to the more general question of the Mennonite witness in an urban world.

I. THE IDEA OF "WITNESS" IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Since my Seminary encounter with the critical problems of the fourth Gospel, I have been impressed with the fact that while scholars debate questions of authorship, intended readers, historicity of the material, and whether the *logos* of the prologue had its source in Greek philosophy or Hebraic Scriptures, the Gospel of John continues to be the most widely used of the four Gospels by believing Christians who know nothing about its critical problems. Thus, on the one hand, we have E. C. Hoskyns in his two volume study of the fourth Gospel coming to the conclusion that critical knowledge will not solve the problems of understanding the fourth Gospel, which is a book lying "beyond human knowledge."[2] And on the other hand, we have a Professor of English Bible at the Biblical Seminary of New York saying,

> Of all the parts of the Scripture deemed suitable to be put into the hands of those needing light on the simplicities of the Christian faith, none has been more frequently employed for this purpose than John.[3]

In attempting to interpret the fourth Gospel I stand with the majority of scholars who see in the Gospel one preeminent objective:

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1 "What Is The Mennonite Church in the City?" a paper read at a meeting of General Conference City Church Ministers, Bluffton, Ohio, August 11-12, 1959.

2 E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel,* issue edited by F. N. Davey (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1947), p. 20. Hoskyns does say, "Whatever the Fourth Gospel may be, it is not a text-book of metaphysics. Primarily it is the text-book of the parish priest and the inspiration of the straight-forward layman." *Loc. cit.*

3 Paul F. Barackman, "The Gospel According to John," *Interpretation* (January 1952, p. 63.

namely, to make disciples of Jesus Christ of its readers; to bring them over the cleft from unbelief to belief.

> Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.[4]

Apart from the very fascinating and baffling current problem of whether the intended readers were sophisticated Greeks living in the vicinity of Ephesus[5] or Jews who, having experienced the destruction of Jerusalem, were thought to be in a position to give one more serious hearing to the claims of Christ to be the Messiah,[6] the fourth Gospel is "John's Witness To Jesus," as George Appleton entitled his little volume. And so, the idea of "witness" is central in the Gospel of John. Implicit in the fourth Gospel is the following definition of a Christian witness: *he is one who tells of his own personal knowledge of the saving power of Christ* ("We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write"[7]), *having an existential point of contact with the recipient* ("Come and see"[8]), *and respecting his accountable right to make his own decision about accepting or rejecting the Christ* ("Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel"[9]).

1. Telling of one's own personal knowledge. A witness, by definition, is one who has seen and heard and touched the reality of Christian faith by firsthand experience. The effectiveness of witnessing as a fundamental means of achieving our evangelistic objective in the city is precisely the fact, as W. E. Hocking points out, that "religion becomes universal at the point where it becomes most peculiarly personal."[10] The faith to which we bear witness has many integral aspects, one of which is that which we call the Mennonite "way of life." This can become meaningful to those to whom we witness only if it is something we have experienced as real and vital. One of the most lasting and fruitful evangelistic encounters I have had began with the question, "What do you Mennonites believe, anyway?" A question like this can embarrass us and block a fruitful relationship with sincere inquirers only if that to which we witness is a set of dogmas that has us imprisoned rather than experiences that have

4 John 20:30-31.
5 See Julian Price Love, *The Gospel and the Gospels* (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1953), p. 152. Also R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1917), p. 41.
6 See T. C. Smith, *Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), pp. 22 ff.
7 John 1:45.
8 John 1:46.
9 John 1:49.
10 Quoted by Samuel M. Shoemaker, *How To Become a Christian* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 148.

set us free. This raises the question of the relation of Mennonite doctrines to our Mennonite witness: and let me say that doctrines are exceedingly important; I do not want to disparage doctrines. But doctrines are secondary; the experience of the reality of our faith is primary. I believe this is what LeRoy Kennel, pastor of the Lombard (Illinois) Mennonite Church, meant when he wrote:

> As a church, we do have contributions to make. We serve as one of the "species" of Christ's organization dedicated to him and to his work. We also have a set of emphases which cannot but help to complement the work of other churches as well as be a blessing to them. Examples are: love amidst ease, simplicity amidst superficialness, standards amidst compromise.[11]

True witness, in other words, is a personal witness to the power of Jesus Christ, for "We speak of what we know and bear witness to what we have seen."[12]

2. Having an existential point of contact. Amid all the definitions of the term "existential" as used in our generation, I believe there is one connotation common to all: namely, a commitment to the exigencies of physical and social existence. "And the Word became *flesh* (physical) and dwelt among *us* (social)."[13] As T. C. Smith in his new interpretation of the fourth Gospel translates it, "The logos both became flesh and pitched his tent among us."[14] In thinking about Mennonite city missions, I seriously doubt whether we have adequately wrestled with what it means to pitch one's tent among the people; what it means to have an existential point of contact with the other person. John the Baptist, who is the prototype of a witness in the fourth Gospel, apparently had it while at the same time he preached nonconformity and separation from the "world." The fourth Gospel writer was seeking a point of contact, no doubt, when he employed the idea of the *logos:* "In the beginning was the logos. . . ."[15] William Temple speaks to this point when he writes,

> John, by appropriating the idea of the *logos,* was not proclaiming unfamiliar truth; rather he is seeking common ground with his readers. It is of no use to tell these Hellenistic Ephesians that the Messiah has come; they are not expecting any Messiah, and would not be interested; it would be like trying to excite an English audience by proclaiming the arrival of the Mahdi.[16]

Whether or not all of Temple's textual assumptions are correct in light of newer evidence, the point is well taken. If we as Mennonites

11 See *The Mennonite Church in the City,* January 15, 1960, p. 7.
12 John 3:11.
13 John 1:14.
14 T. C. Smith, *op. cit.,* p. 66.
15 John 1:1.
16 William Temple, *Readings in the Fourth Gospel* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1939), p. 4.

are really concerned to go into the cities of our land and bear witness to Jesus Christ, it is of no use to speak in a frame of reference that comes from the farm or rural scene; urban man has little interest in farms or things rural. I have heard that the majority of those who go to see the farm exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago are themselves farmers who are in Chicago on a holiday. The city person is not interested.

> The ordinary city-dweller knows nothing of the earth's productivity; he does not know the sunrise and rarely notices when the sun sets; ask him in what phase the moon is, or when the tide in the harbor is high, or even how high the average tide runs, and likely as not he cannot answer you. Seed-time and harvest are nothing to him. If he has never witnessed an earthquake, a great flood, or a hurricane, he probably does not feel the power of nature as a reality surrounding his life at all. His realities are the motors that run elevators, subway trains, and cars, the steady feed of water and gas through the mains and of electricity over the wires, the crates of foodstuff that arrive by night and are spread for his inspection before his day begins, the concrete and brick, bright steel and dingy woodwork that take the place of earth and waterside and sheltering roof for him. His "house" is an apartment in the great man-made city; so far as he is concerned, it has no interior, no exterior of its own. It could not collapse, let in rain, or blow away. If it leaks the fault is with a pipe or with the people upstairs, not with heaven.[17]

An essential in effectively witnessing to urban man is to understand *him,* to know *his* mode of thought and life, to find common ground with *him,* to pitch our tent alongside of his. It is entirely appropriate for new missionaries to Japan or the Congo to spend a year or two learning to know the language and the culture of the people. It is naive to think that rural Mennonites can go to the cities of our land and witness effectively without first learning to know the mind of urban man.

3. Respecting his accountable right to make his own decision. We are dealing here both with the theology and the psychology of evangelistic response. The climax of the fourth Gospel as *kerygma* is the simple and straightforward formulation, "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."[18] This is "expectant evangelism"[19] and its premise is the accountable right to believe or not to believe. It is helpful to remember that the transaction is between this person and Jesus Christ. The witness is the midwife, and it is his duty to let God bring to pass this new birth, without forced delivery. As Seward Hiltner has put it, "Decisions which peo-

17 Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: Mentor Books, 1942), p. 234.
18 John 20:31.
19 A term coined at the International Missionary Conference at Whitby. See Bryan Green, *The Practice of Evangelism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 29.

ple make must be autonomous decisions . . . if they are to be a real part of the person who makes them."[20] The "total Gospel for the total man in his total environment" is a slogan that appeals to thoroughgoing Mennonitism and its preaching of discipleship as "the Anabaptist answer to Christ;[21] but in evangelizing anyone it isn't "total" at once, and here lies the crux of evangelistic response: it is achieved when that part of an evangelee's need (or sin) that is recognized by him is touched by that part of the evangel which is accepted by him. As Samuel Shoemaker put it, a person surrenders "as much of himself as he can, to as much of Christ as he understands."[22] In other words there might be compartments in his life (job, friends, home) that are not wholly surrendered at the time that he tells the Lord he will do henceforth as much of His will as he sees. This is particularly true in evangelizing the urban dweller because the compartmentalizing of his life is so complex and ominous.

II. Reflections from an Attempt to Witness in Chicago

In our pastorate in Chicago we had considerable opportunity to bear witness to Jesus Christ. Out of perhaps fifty persons with whom we had a more than superficial evangelistic encounter I have abstracted two profiles for the sake of elaborating the idea of "witness" prior to drawing some hypotheses concerning the Mennonite witness in an urban world.[23]

1. Let's call the first person Frank Henderson. Frank would appear to be like any other urban industrial worker. He puts in his eight hours as a crane operator for U. S. Steel, gets union pay, is well spoken of by his foreman. But off the job, Frank is an alcoholic of the nonviolent, nonderelict variety. His abuse of his family, rather than being physical, is chiefly that he spends money needed for subsistence on drink. Frank and his brother came to the city from their rural town. The brother worked his way through law school, and is now an attorney in a Chicago law firm. Frank started with U. S. Steel with high hopes of working his way up the industrial ladder. But he has been with the company for sixteen years, and, apart from enjoying a certain seniority and a substantial wage, he is performing the same work that he did sixteen years ago—driving that crane back and forth. He has little opportunity for social relationships at work, be-

20 Quoted by Gaines S. Dobbins, "Principles of Evangelism According to Christ," *Pastoral Psychology* (September 1954), p. 50.

21 Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Theology of Discipleship," *MQR* (January 1950), p. 29.

22 Samuel M. Shoemaker, "How to Witness: Making Faith Alive and Relevant to Other People." *The Evangel* (December 1952), p. 419.

23 See Leland Harder, "Evangelizing the Urban Industrial Worker," *Proceedings of the Tenth Conference on Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems,* 1955, pp. 53-64. These profiles are composite representations rather than the situations of particular persons.

cause he is up there all by himself most of the working day. Off the job he seems friendless and alone in the complex environment of the city. Then one day, following the funeral of his son, Frank becomes a candidate for Christian evangelism at which time he seeks the help of the Mennonite Church in his state of deeply felt need. Recalling our definition of a Christian witness as "one who tells of his own personal knowledge of the saving power of Christ, having an existential point of contact with the recipient, and respecting his accountable right to make his own decision about accepting or rejecting the Christ," we may report that the components are all at least minimally in evidence. Through a series of providential circumstances Frank and his wife become active participants in the fellowship of the Mennonite Church. But just when it seems as though they would be nurtured in the faith of our fathers, Frank is out of work during a nation-wide steel strike; and the family is forced to move because they are unable to keep up the $95 a month payments. They seek the advice of the church. If at all possible they want to stay in the community where for the first time they have found friends in the church; but there isn't anything for rent within their means. In desperation they are toying with the idea of returning to Pennsylvania where Frank grew up and where he has relatives. But if they could find another place within their means in the community, Frank stands a fairly good chance of getting a job at the Wrigley Gum Company, where his brother has connections. If you were a member of that particular Mennonite city church, what would be your witness to the Frank Hendersons at this point of need in their lives?

2. The other case is that of Jane Olmstead. At the age of forty-eight, Jane is a long-distance operator for Bell Telephone Company. She came to this country as a child with her stepparents from Norway. Determined to avoid the economic dependency experienced by her parents, she quit high school to go to work in the factory. Five years later, at the age of twenty, she went to work for Bell Telephone, and has been there for the past twenty-eight years. Shortly after beginning with the company Jane married Harry Olmstead, a telegrapher; and they had two children, both of whom are now married and living elsewhere. At Bell Telephone Jane has the reputation of being the most indispensable operator in her department, but also of being the most bitter and hateful. With scorn she tells how the supervisor stands over the operators and barks at them to increase their speed of completing calls; and she deeply resents such pressure at the same time that she feverishly pushes ahead of all the other girls. Then in an extended period of sickness and hospitalization Harry accepts

Christ and is baptized and received into the Mennonite Church. There is such notable evidence of change in his attitudes and actions that Jane is attracted to the Christian life and fellowship herself. But sensing the great personal price involved in being a disciple of Christ, she hesitates to take the step that she correctly suspects would mean a radical change in her own character and behavior. "Do you mean to say that if I become a Christian," she tells an evangelistic team from the church, "I would have to love my supervisor at work? I hate her!" When invited again to commit her life to Jesus Christ, she retorts, "Right now, all I can do is to commit my life to the telephone company." Again recalling our definition of a Christian witness, what approach to Jane Olmstead would be most appropriate to her need?

I believe that what is needful in the evangelization of the Frank Hendersons and Jane Olmsteads of our American urban society is just what the Mennonite Church, of all communions in Christendom, ought to be able to provide. A radical solution is needed and the Mennonite Church is by definition a radical group of believers. I doubt whether we are fully conscious as to how radical our doctrine really is. I would suggest what I feel are three of the essential elements in the total ministry that is needful in our cities.

The first element is a spiritually binding fellowship of love. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another."[24] "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."[25] The loneliness of men and women in our big cities is tragic. The tragedy lies in the fact that in their desperate desire for fellowship urban men do things they would not otherwise do and turn for relief to people and places in which there is no relief but only a greater impending tragedy. There are, to be sure, thousands of churches across our land that offer fellowship of the social club variety; but precisely because they are cut from the same institutional cloth as a myriad of other agencies and organizations of society, they are bankrupt in providing a fellowship which is spiritually binding. Karl Barth has spoken to this situation in the following words: "What have we to say to one another if we do not dare to speak bindingly with each other? Is not the very fact that so wretchedly little binding address is heard in the Church accountable for a goodly share of her misery—is it not perhaps *the* misery?"[26] A binding fellowship provides a spiritual home for people, where amid the wilder-

24 John 13:25.

25 Matthew 18:18.

26 Quoted by Franklin H. Littell, *The Free Church* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1957), p. 113.

ness of societal ambiguities of role and status, they know themselves to be brother and sister through Christ the Lord.[27] Its best product is a sanctuary in the authentic sense as a place of refuge rather than the stereotyped sense of a building where formal worship is conducted on Sunday morning. From my encounter with men and women of one local urban community, I learned that there are two qualities which those reachable people have which, if our mission is authentic, provides our point of contact with them: one is an uncanny ability to detect whether our underlying motive is that of self-giving love; and the other is an inner prompting to seek out sooner or later when the need becomes desperate those in the community who are known to offer refuge from the "tumult of our life's wild, restless sea."

A second element in such a ministry is an evangelism rooted in the "power to become." I almost used the term "dynamic evangelism" but by now the adjective "dynamic" is rather hackneyed through overuse; but in the sense of "powerful," it is still suggestive. "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."[28] To become a Christian through such an evangelism is to undergo transformation of life issuing in a new power with which to face the Adversary. It's as straightforward as this: either Christ is Master, or it is the Adversary. Take alcoholism, for example. Alcoholism is a very common by-product of modern urban industrialism. A Christian witness in the city needs to be a friend to alcoholics. But to think of alcoholism as a sickness rather than as a sin is to confuse the issue. If alcoholism is a sickness rather than a result of separation from God, where is the doctor to make him well and the treatment to produce the cure? A dynamic personal evangelism is the major weapon in ministering to the alcoholics in our urban centers as well as to the needs of all urban men. Its telling quality is something akin to a passion to bring men and women to a saving faith in Jesus Christ through personal evangelism. The one thing needful in ministering to urban man is to bring him to a point of decision about Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord.

A third element of profound significance might best be described as a brotherhood ethic based on an understanding of the demonic character of urban social structure. A stronghold of demonic power in modern society is urban industry. The mechanization of industry has turned creative craftsmen into robot-like assembly-line-

27 Matthew 12:48-50.
28 John 1:12.

men, whose jobs are aptly described as "installing the 18th part of the pin." Division of labor and the mechanization of the productive processes have robbed the worker not only of his inner desire to be creative but also of the sense of the community of work which ought to accompany our economic interdependence. The workers have sought to regain a semblance of community of work through union membership. Their sense of community is strengthened by the knowledge that they and their kind are firmly banded together to defend their common interests against the oppressive interests of the owner-management group. You simply cannot understand the character of the modern labor union if you think that its chief functions are the oft-mentioned trio: higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions. The union is more adequately interpreted as a composite symbol of protection for all the undefinable social values that the worker cherishes. Unfortunately, the unions have shown serious weaknesses which have still left the worker in a critical state of unsolved need. The centralization of control of the unions outside a single industry has helped to breed the very kinds of demonic power and intimidation that were being fought in management. I have little to say about the church's prospects of evangelizing urban industry as a system because I subscribe to the view that the church's task is other than to "baptize" any part of the societal structure. But as long as Frank Henderson works for U. S. Steel and Jane Olmstead for the Bell Telephone Company, I am bound by Christian imperative to pitch my tent alongside these my brother and sister in such a way that should they experience any loss of livelihood at the hands of demonic forces of supply and demand, what I have I freely share with them insofar as they have genuine need. In the case of Frank Henderson, the problem at a critical moment in his life was housing; and a brotherhood ethic I believe requires that we help to find a home for this urban brother. The answer to his problem of operating that crane day in and day out is neither an inevitable change of employment nor some Christian equivalent to the nonviolent picket line: it lies rather in such a joint participation in the Gospel, which in this case is centered in that Chicago Mennonite Church, that enables Frank Henderson to transcend the demonic characteristics of his life at the very moment that he would appear to the unbeliever to be most diabolically involved. This is the power that can produce the crane operator who is himself a true witness to the person of Jesus Christ. For further documentation of this theme, I invite you to read Samuel Shoemaker's book, *By the Power of God,* especially the chapter entitled "God and a Steel Worker."

III. Alternatives Facing the Mennonite Church in an Urban Era

My conceptual framework for this final section is the sociological theory of cultural change. My materials are historical and theological concerning the distinctive place in history of the Mennonite church as related to today's urban challenge. I assume that there are three norms which characterize thoroughgoing Mennonitism at its best.[29] One is a norm regarding the essence of Christian being: to be a Christian is to pledge to obey Christ in thoroughgoing discipleship, bringing one's whole outward life and social relationships under a radical lordship of Christ. The second is a norm regarding the essence of Christian community: a membership standing apart from all other memberships based on a mature and voluntary act of the individual stemming from a knowledge of what constitutes true Christian being. And third is a norm regarding ethical imperatives: a radical ethic of love and nonresistance applied to all human relationships. Evangelism, in the light of these norms, is the key to their efficacy: it produces the moment of decision which alone gives meaning to the norms which the church proclaims. I am intrigued by John Howard Yoder's argument that with the birth of Anabaptism,

> evangelism, which for the "Constantinian" reformers was by definition inconceivable, became a real possibility; alone of all the churches of the Reformation, the Anabaptists considered evangelism as belonging to the essential being of the church.[30]

We are confronted today, however, with the anomaly of a missionary brotherhood having become ingrown and surviving predominantly by biological rather than by spiritual procreation. Concerning the General Conference Mennonite Church, which group I know best, this is easily documented. On a tabulation of 41,276 members, I have discovered that 89 per cent were born of Mennonite stock.[31] Sociologically, the Mennonite Church is in what the sociologist would call a state of structural disequilibrium.[32] A structural disequilibrium is a contradiction within the group itself over what that group is to become. For example, we say that to be a Christian is to pledge to obey Christ in thoroughgoing discipleship. We also say that to be a Christian is to be separated from society and nonconformist to its cultural patterns. These postulates comprise a disequilibrium if a unilinear commitment to separation *a priori* precludes any action which may be required by thoroughgoing discipleship.

29 See Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," *MQR* (April 1944), pp. 67-68.

30 John Howard Yoder, "The Prophetic Dissent of the Anabaptists," *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1957), pp. 97-98.

31 A member was considered to have been born of Mennonite stock if one of his parents was a Mennonite.

32 See Godfrey and Monica Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (Cambridge: University Press, 1954), pp. 125 ff.

(This disequilibrium may, of course, be dissolved in principle if you agree with Franklin Littell that separation from the world is a "spiritual rather than a geographical matter."[33]) To put it differently, an integral aspect of the voluntaristic basis of the Anabaptist-Mennonite Church is a mobile and vigorous missionary recruitment program; but in withdrawal, an active evangelistic zeal tends to be replaced and contradicted by a passive, immobile, self-perpetuative system centered in catechetical instruction and indoctrination. Thus, you have our most conservative Mennonite groups virtually denying by their actions that the Great Commission has any claim upon them. Once this basic contradiction is recognized, the alternatives facing the Mennonite Church, it seems to me, begin to focus.

One alternative is that already alluded to above: it may undergo decreasing voluntarism and move in the direction of the isolated folk society in which there is an equivalence of membership in the territorial community and in the church. For example, that the extreme isolation represented by the Old Order Amish actually represents observable change in one direction from a prior point in time is clear in the following analysis by Harold S. Bender:

> May we assume as some have done that certain groups, the most conservative of today such as the Old Order Amish and the Old Colony Mennonites, have remained unchanged and can be used as control groups by which to test the changes of the others? Or is it also possible that the state of some of these groups today represents deterioration and degeneration, and not at all the original from which they came? . . . When we compare what is at times a stolid, cold, self-satisfied, materialistic or tradition-bound and culture-conformist Mennonitism of today with the original aggressive, creative, nonconformist first generation and first century Anabaptism we can well discern that a great change has taken place.[34]

The first alternative, then, would mean to move down the Amish, or Hutterite, or Old Colony road.

The opposite of this alternative is, of course, to undergo *increasing* involvement in the larger society at the expense of geographical withdrawal. In this case the alternatives are more complex, but two possible results of movement in this direction are suggested.

The second alternative is that the members of the Mennonite Church become so functionally intermingled with the members of society that the church becomes one of the many more-or-less voluntaristic denominations in America, readily absorbed into the dominant religious stream without a serious challenge to the secular social structure. As a group of Mennonite city church leaders, we stand at

33 Franklin H. Littell, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
34 Harold S. Bender, "Outside Influences on Mennonite Thought," *Proceedings of the Ninth Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems*, 1953, pp. 34, 36.

the crossroads in this respect. Behind us are several decades of feeble attempts to evangelize in the city.[35] About us are apparent successes of other denominations.[36] In our frustration we are vulnerable. We turn to the "how-to-do-it" books [37] for help, and the discovery of usable materials may fill such a vacuum that we slur over the question of presuppositions. What does Shippey mean, for instance, when in his book, *Church Work in the City,* he lists ten criteria for an effective city church, the first one of which is a "reasonable membership size—at least five hundred active members."[38] I doubt if Winfield Fretz is entirely wrong when he writes:

> The question of Mennonite city churches is not whether we should have them, but what kind we should have. The present tendency is in the direction of community churches. Whenever Mennonites cooperate with comity committees of city church federations, they tacitly agree to become community churches. This is a modern version of the medieval parish church and the Reformation Protestant concept of the church. It is the idea that all citizens in a given area go the one church in that area, the assumption being that all Protestant churches are in the last analysis very much alike.[39]

It is not so much the comity committees that worry me as the highly articulate mainline Protestant view that the church is an institution of society rather than an outpost of heaven. There is already too much evidence of movement in the "mainline" direction in the Mennonite Church to the detriment of a Christian witness in an urban world. Perhaps we ought to leave the building of "successful"[40] churches to the Methodists and Presbyterians, who are much better able financially and theologically to pay the price.

There is still a third alternative, I believe, which is more hypothetical and probably outside the scope of verification at this stage of our history, except perhaps by reference to the original movement of the sixteenth century. This is that the church recapture the intensity of its prophetic dissent in society and meet resultant conflict by

35 See J. Winfield Fretz, *A Study of Mennonite Religious Institutions in Chicago* (unpublished B.D. thesis, Chicago Theological Seminary, 1940). Also, Leland Harder, *Seventy-Third and Laflin: The Story of a City Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church* (published by the author, 1952).

36 While there is hardly any denomination that can speak of "success" in the inner city areas, the suburbs have yielded "rich" returns for almost every church group except our own. See for example, Yoshio Fukuyama, *A Study of High Potential Churches Aided by the Board of Home Missions* (Dept. of Research, Congregational & Christian Churches, 1956).

37 Frederick A. Shippey, *Church Work in the City* (New York: Abingdon-okesbury Press, 1952); Walter Kloetzli and Arthur Hillman, *Urban Church Planning* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 195); Willard A. Pleuthner, *More Power For Your Church* (New York: Fariat, Straus, and Young, 1952); the "Bibliogaphy for the Urban Church" published by the Protestant Council of the City of New York has an entire "How To" section of books and references.

38 Shippey, *op. cit.,* p. 60.

39 For Fretz's statement, see *The Mennonite Church in the City,* 4th issue (April 1, 1957), p. 3.

40 See *The Mennonite Church in the City,* response from John W. Miller (May 15, 1959), p. 4; and a report of a survey of the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, surburban area by Ward Shelly (January 15, 1960), p. 6.

sacrificing the ecclesiastical structure of a settled religious group for a more transitory, mobile type of organization. The clearest specification of this alternative I have found is that by Paul Peachey:

> Anabaptism means that the living fellowship by its very nature can never be transformed into objectified ecclesiastical structure, for fellowship with Christ and the brother is, in the full-orbed sense, the essence of the church.
>
> This conclusion may at first thought spell pure anarchy. . . . Accustomed as we are to conceive the church largely in institutional terms, and to conceive church unity in terms of common theologies, traditions, and unified institutions of government, we are ill-equipped to understand the unity in Christ. . . . For while reliance on culture and ecclesiastical structure can insure a greater uniformity among a group of like-traditioned and like-minded assemblies, those very unifying entities weigh heavily on the true spiritual creativity of the assembly, and throttle the experience of fellowship with those standing outside the communion in question.[41]

The Mennonite witness in today's world, for Peachey, is neither necessarily discontinuous with the past nor essentially tied to those groups which stand in direct cultural and biological descent from the sixteenth-century movement. It is an unfulfilled mission having its source in a "constitutive act" by which the church is called into being.

> But what church? Simply . . . that people in whose midst the Word of God had been proclaimed, and in whom repentance and new life were brought forth and a new gathering of God's people had occurred. This meant that the work of the Spirit as He gathers a people is self-authenticating, not bound or determined by ecclesiastical institutions.[42]

If Peachey is right, it is possible that the forces of our time thrusting us out into the urban centers of the nation are just what our communions need in order to fulfil our mission in the world. In another essay in which he formulates the hypothesis that "the urban environment provides a more congenial setting for a vital Anabaptism than does the rural," Peachey argues that "In the closed or semi-closed Mennonite rural community, ethnic factors are a constant threat to the spiritual impulse as the constitutive dynamic of community."[43] A Mennonite witness "to troubled men in a troubled world" is ours to give "if our study of the Anabaptist vision can serve as a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, if the Anabaptist heritage can decrease that Christ may increase."[44]

41 Paul Peachey, "The Modern Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision." *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision,* p. 338.
42 *Ibid.,* p. 337.
43 Paul Peachey, "Early Anabaptists and Urbanism," *Proceedings of the Tenth Conference on Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems,* 1955(pp. 82, 76.
44 Paul Peachey, *op. cit.,* p. 340.

I would like, as my final point, to illustrate this in concrete terms. In Fresno, California, in a northeast suburban community, we have a General Conference church which is five years old. The pastor is Peter Ediger, one of our Seminary graduates who went out with unusual motivation and capacity to shepherd a new church. Most of the charter members at Fresno were folks of solid low-German Mennonite birth, with such typical names as Bartel, Buller, Ediger, Schmidt, Siemens, and Wiens. On the other hand, Peter's list of "friends of the church" in 1958 included individuals of non-Mennonite background, having such names as Buckley, Caskey, Lappin, Horn, Metz, Benson, and Sutherland. The chief problem faced by the Fresno church, according to Peter, was the transition from the "none except Jews" stage to the "Greeks also" stage. Peter borrowed these terms from Acts 11 to signify Mennonites and non-Mennonites. At that time he actually carried on two church programs, one for the "Jews" and one for the "Greeks." His weekly church bulletin carried the announcements for the program for the "Jews" and his monthly community news sheet carried the announcements for the program for the "Greeks." For example, the April 1958 issue of the community newssheet carried the following note:

> "What is at the heart of the Christian faith?" "What are the beliefs of other religions?" "What is of supreme worth in life?"
>
> These are some of the questions that have been discussed in recent meetings. The next one is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15, at the George Lappin home, 5038 E. Hammon. . . . Interested? Contact the Discussion Coordinator, Harold Benson, CL 1-5911.

Harold Benson, of course, was not a member of the Fresno church; neither was George Lappin. These were people whom Peter had learned to know in the community. They met once a week in their own homes. Discussions not infrequently lasted until midnight and later. The results of these meetings were several commitments to Christ, other serious inquiries concerning what it really means to be a Christian. Peter, of course, was thrilled by these new experiences with the people of that suburban community. But he was very much aware that there was a great gulf between his own people and these new inquirers; and his concern was to bridge that gulf. The next steps for those who had accepted Christ would normally be their confession of faith before the brethren, baptism, and reception into church membership. But the question was: Would they really be received by the brethren? There were certain modes of behavior which erected a wall of partition between them. When Peter discussed this with his members, one question that was asked was, Will they really make good Mennonites? The answer that Peter gives to

a question like this is a meditation on John 12:24: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." This spiritual truth, he feels, is relevant for our Mennonite Church as well as for each of us individually. "Are there some ways in which we as a brotherhood are trying desperately to save ourselves from 'falling into the ground and dying' and by so doing 'remaining alone' and failing to 'bring forth much fruit'?"[45]

To witness is to tell of one's own personal knowledge of the saving power of Christ, having an existential point of contact with the recipient, and respecting his accountable right to make his own decision about accepting or rejecting the Christ. The Mennonite Church has a witness to bear in this new urban era. In order to bear this witness, it must pitch its tent in the midst of the multitudes at the same time that it revitalizes is prophetic dissent concerning the demonic forces that control their minds and hearts.

In the words of Samuel Shoemaker:

(Let us) stay near the door.
(Let us) neither go too far in, not stay too far out.
The door is the most important door in the world—
It is the door through which they walk when they find God.[46]

45 See *The Mennonite Church in the City* (June 1, 1957), p. 3.
46 Samuel M. Shoemaker, "Apologia For My Life," *The Pulpit* (December 1954), p. 17.

(*Continued from Page 316*)

The tone of the account is often, no doubt unconsciously, critical of the Mennonite Board of Education. The Board spent too much time on minor matters. Ultra-conservative leaders attempted to turn back the cultural clock. The closing of the college in 1923 was stark tragedy. The Board prohibited inter-scholastic athletics and was responsible for discontinuance of the annual *Reflector*. The Executive Committee of the Board stopped the naming of the "Alumnus of the Year." The emerging strength of the Board is clearly pictured, but apparently not with full appreciation and approval.

The author in his preface correctly observes that it is "impossible to present the incidents of the history in a manner universally acceptable." With so many details to choose from, it was difficult to know what to include and what to omit. The history of forensics seems somewhat out of proportion. The major victory of the administration in integrating the College with the total life of the Mennonite Church could have been graphically illustrated by a list of conference, General Conference, and various board responsibilities which faculty members carried.

So while this history of sixty years of a Mennonite college is very valuable in the preservation of data and in its picture of the educational awakening of a denomination, it is not the final appraisal, which some later historian, farther removed from the happenings and their attendant emotions, will have to write.

Scottdale, Pa. Paul Erb

THE ORIGIN OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH AND ITS LATER DIVISIONS

IRA D. LANDIS*

Through the centuries Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has been a stronghold of the Mennonite Church and the "plain sects."[1] It is also the cradle of several other Protestant denominations. One of the earliest American-born denominations is the Seventh Day Baptist Church, which started on the Mill Creek near Bird-in-Hand in the early 720's and settled on the Cocalico Creek, building the Ephrata Cloisters in the early 1730's. In the Revolutionary War period Lancaster County produced two further denominations. (1) The United Brethren Church was born in the Isaac Long barn near Landis Valley on June 7, 1767. Its first conference was held in 1789,[2] and by 1800 a permanent conference was organized. A considerable number of the early members of this group in Lancaster County came from the Mennonites.[3] (2) The Brethren in Christ originated in Conoy Township about 1776.

After the Revolution several other denominations were founded in or near Lancaster County. (1) Jacob Albright (1759-1818), who moved from Montgomery County to Hahnstown in Lancaster County in 1786, organized the Evangelical Church in 1807 at Mühlbach in nearby Lebanon County.[4] (2) An ex-Mennonite United Brethren preacher baptized John Winebrenner (1797-1860), himself a Reformed minister, who then organized the Church of God in Harrisburg in 1830.[5]

The Mennonite Church has suffered three schisms in Lancaster County. The Reformed Mennonites (Herrites) originated in West Lampeter Township, their organized existence beginning in 1812.[6]

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1 In 1956 the writer calculated that the sects of Lancaster County had a 27,756 baptized membership and "a community" of 43,617 out of the estimated population of 248,000. Cf. Ira D. Landis, *The Lancaster Mennonite Conference, History and Background* (Lancaster, 1956)

2 P. B. Gibble, *History of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference* (Church of the United Brethren in Christ) (Dayton, 1951), pp. 6, 18 ff.

3 The initial meeting with Bishop Martin Boehm (1725-1812) of Pequea Township, Mennonite, and Philip Otterbein (1726-1813), Reformed, was at the Isaac Long barn, the property owned by an ancestor of the writer, being located less than a mile from his birthplace. Here it is said five Mennonite ministers were present. The Boehm-Otterbein movement especially depleted the Mennonite ranks in Lebanon County. The *1959 World Almanac* reports the United Brethren membership as 746,460 in 4,156 congregations.

4 He lived where Luke Martin now lives and preached in a schoolhouse a mile away, now the Napierville Mennonite Christian Day School property (in a more recent house). He was confirmed a Lutheran, "awakened" in 1790, became a Methodist circuit rider in 1796, organized the Evangelical Association in 1803, which held its first conference in 1807. He died on one of his circuit rides and was buried at Kleinfeltersville. His widow was buried at Bergstrasse Lutheran Cemetery.

5 Jacob Erb (1804-1883), tenth bishop of the United Brethren Church, was born near Manheim, a son of Christian and Elizabeth Hershey Erb. His parents had moved to a location opposite Harrisburg by 1810. See S. G. Yahn, *History of the Churches of God in North America* (Harrisburg, 1926), p. 96, for an account of Winebrenner's baptism.

6 Francis Herr (1748-1810) was excommunicated about 1788. His father was Bishop John

The small Stauffer Mennonite schism emerged at Groffdale in 1845-1846. The Old Order Mennonites broke off at Weaverland in the fall of 1893. This schism and later ones, among the latter in 1926 and 1946, were purely local movements.[7]

Lancaster County Mennonites also made significant contributions to the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in the spring of 1892, and to some of the nondenominational independent movements of recent times, especially Calvary Independent Church in Lancaster City, formed about 1935.[8]

It is possible that tact and wisdom were not always used on all sides of the schisms and new movements listed above. The issues were seldom, if ever, primarily a question of doctrine. At times personalities clashed, at times new types of piety and practices were the issues, at times old types and practices, but always thereafter barriers against return were built.

The origins and character of most of the above groups and movements have been carefully studied and accurately reported in various publications, and serious modifications of established conclusions are scarcely to be expected. In the case of the Brethren in Christ, however, new evidence has been uncovered which modifies the theory of origin offered by the historian of the group, A. W. Climenhaga, in his *History of the Brethren in Christ Church* (Nappanee, 1942). The following statements are made in the book:

> Due to much persecution many Pietists and Anabaptists came to America. The Brethren in Christ Church was born in the cradle of the faith of these who had left their mother country for a place where they could worship God as they desired.[9]
>
> Pietists. This is another European group of people which is of interest to the Brethren in Christ.[9a] The Pietistic movement was not a church, but rather a powerful religious awakening in the Church of Europe during the later decades of the seventeenth century. Churches growing out of these movements [Pietism, Waldensianism, Anabaptism] came to North America, and a number of other church-

Herr (1720-1797) of Strasburg, in whose home the Strasburg congregation worshipped. After his death, Francis' son John (1781-1850), with a preacher Abraham Landis and a deacon Abraham Groff, organized the new church as laymen. They chose John Herr to perform the baptism and to serve as their first bishop. He lived close to the present Longenecker meetinghouse, the first and strongest "Herrite" congregation. The present membership of the Reformed Mennonites in the United States and Canada is 834, *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory 1959*.

7. The Wengerites (the Groffdale Conference) separated from the Horning group (the Weaverland Conference), under Joseph O. Wenger (1868-June 30, 1956), following Bishop Jonas H. Martin's death (January 15, 1893-July 3, 1925). The next division from the Weaverland Conference was the Reidenbach Mennonite group, whose center was near Reidenbach's Store in Earl Township. These are sometimes called the Thirty-Fivers, since the group originally had about 35 members. Recently (1957) this group divided again, with still thirty-five members in the larger group.

This was the eastern wing of the Wisler division at Yellow Creek, Indiana, in 1872 (Cf. John C. Wenger, "Jacob Wisler and the Schism of 1872," *MQR* XXXIII, 1959, pp. 108-131) and in Ontario in 1889 (Cf. L. J. Burkholder, *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario*, Markham, 1935, pp. 197-200.).

8 The Bulletin of the latter gives 1937.

9 Climenhaga, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

9a *Ibid.*, p. 24.

es with the same background started in this country.[9b] The Brethren in Christ Church is not a split from another Church body but rather an organization of a group of believers who had never joined another Church. At least, the majority of the first organization were of this type.[9c] The organization of the Brethren in Christ Church does not date back to any one man as is the case with a number of Church bodies.[9d]

In the Appendix[9e] of his book Climenhaga cites five authors with divergent theories of the origin of the Brethren in Christ. Abraham Cassel, a historian of the Church of the Brethren, associates their origin with the United Brethren and the Church of the Brethren. J. N. Engle associates the origin with the Mennonites and the United Brethren. Baswell D. Hitchcock associates the origin directly with that of the Church of the Brethren in Europe, as though they were one and the same. John K. Miller of Maytown says: "They did not desire to sever relations with the Mennonites but simply desired baptism by immersion" (p. 349). The following section gives a number of versions from other church historians not cited by Climenhaga.

A Church of the Brethren Committee in 1915 published the following account of the origin of the Brethren in Christ.

> They [United Brethren] "elected William Otterbein and Martin Boehm as superintendents or bishops; and agreed that each should act according to his own convictions as to the mode of baptism." Now this meeting was said to have been held in Donegal Township, and resulted in many conversions. But not all were ready and willing to unite with this new denomination, believing there is but one mode of baptism that is right, and that is triune immersion. Jacob Nissley, a minister of the River Brethren, who is dead for some time, told the writer, that a delegation of those dissatisfied ones went to the vicinity of Manheim, to confer with Elder C. Longenecker,[10] with a view of uniting with the Church of the Brethren, but that Elder Longenecker told them that the Brethren Church was not any more on the true foundation. Mr. Nissley said he had his information from the founders of the River Brethren Church. The delegation as above-said were Jacob Engle, Hans Engle, C. Rupp, Hans Stern,[11] a Mr. Heiges, and Schaeffer. Some of them, if not all, came out from the Mennonites, and none from the Brethren Church. The writer in Winebrenner's history, on page 553 says, in a footnote, that "they were sometimes called River Mennonites from the circumstance that

9b *Ibid.*, pp. 29 f.
9c *Ibid.*, p. 33.
9d *Ibid.*, p. 45.
9e *Ibid.*, pp. 337-54.

10 Christian Longenecker (1731-1808), son of Hans, was baptized in 1739, married Margaret Geib, and is buried at Longenecker's west of Lititz. They further state: "Some of them, if not all came out from the Mennonites and none from the Brethren Church" and add: "It is reasonable to suppose that if Elder Longenecker had been at peace with the church and the church with him, and he had done his duty, the River Brethren Church would never have been organized; that is, if they had been honest and sincere, and the presumption is that they were." *History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania*, by the Committee appointed (Lancaster, 1915), p. 386.

11 Hans Stern was a son of immigrant Johan Michael Stern (1712-1753). Hans married a Barbara, and settled on an East Donegal farm by 1759. He died by 1809. Some of John's brothers went to Bedford and Blair Counties.

some of their first ministers had stood in connection with the Mennonites. . . . At a later period some ministers and lay members of the Täufer united with them."

Abraham Gibbel told the writer that Hans Stern, one of the delegation of six, as aforesaid, unhesitatingly told him, that after they went home from Elder Longenecker, they consulted and concluded that they would take the advice, but none of them being baptized they went across the Blue Ridge to Elder George Miller[12] in the Swatara Church; and asked him to baptize them, but told him that they would then organize for themselves, upon which he refused. They then began their church by one baptizing another and he then baptizing the rest.[13]

The account published in 1848 by Israel D. Rupp[14] runs as follows:

Among the several German denominations, especially among the Mennonites, being the most numerous society in Lancaster, awakenings were more common. Between sixty and seventy years ago awakened persons among the Mennonites, Lutherans, German Reformed, Brethren or Täufer, . . . whose hearts were closely joined together—had a common interest, not only in regard to the general cause of religion, but in each other's individual edification, and they met in the capacity of a social devout band, from house to house, to make prayer and supplication for the continued influence of God's Spirit out of these social circles was organized the Religious Association, now commonly known as the River Brethren.[15]

A footnote carries the comment:

Some years ago they were occasionally called River Mennonites from the circumstance that some of their first ministers had stood in connection with the Mennonites. Their first ministers were Jacob Engel, Hans Engle, C. Rupp and others.

Another footnote reads:

Some of them joined in with the United Brethren in Christ. The appellation they assumed was Brethren. Several Societies in different parts of Lancaster County were simultaneously organized, on or near the River, by which the Society is generally known.

Phebe Earle Gibbons (1882) says the following:

I afterwards visited other Dunkers belonging to a division called River Brethren. . . . That these are of the old Baptist stock there can be no doubt, as Jacob Engle, their founder, was of a Mennonite family. . . . In coming to this country about a hundred years ago tradition tells us that the Engle family joined with thirty others who were upon the same vessel to remain bound together in life and in death. The young infants of the families died upon the voyage

12 George Miller (January 1722-September 1798), lived near the Conewago Creek, two miles northwest of Elizabethtown, and was baptized in 1753. *Op. cit.*, pp. 436, 512.

13 *Op. cit.*, p. 383. Dr. C. O. Wittlinger calls attention to the fact that a secondary source gives the name Meigs and suggests the possibility that Heiges is a corruption of Meigs.

14 The author of the account is listed as "A Familiar Friend."

15 Israel D. Rupp, *History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States, Second Improved Edition* (John Winebrenner, Harrisburg, 1848). Preacher Joseph Boll (1842-1935), who lived four years in the Donegal area, told the writer that in his time they were called "River Mennonites."

except Jacob Engle, whereupon an old nurse said that God had preserved him for an especial purpose."[16]

Mead's *Handbook of Denominations* (1951) says:

Another Brethren group, unrelated historically to these and known as the River Brethren, also took its ideology from the German Pietists; this group includes the Brethren in Christ, the Old Order or Yorker Brethren, and United Zion's Children. . . . A considerable number of post-Reformation Pietists fleeing Europe settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in the year 1752. They were loosely grouped in a chain of brotherhoods. . . . The strongest group was simply known as the Brotherhood down by the [Susquehanna] River, and later as the River Brethren.[17]

John C. Wenger's account in his history of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference is as follows:

Members of this church are commonly known as "River Brethren." Their history is very obscure. Their founder, a man named Jacob Engel, and his brother [John] were led to conversion by a Brethren preacher, Alexander Mack. About 1770 Engel and a number of others, probably from Mennonite and Dunkard families, were baptized by trine immersion in the Susquehanna River, in southern Pennsylvania. Engle may have been of Mennonite parentage, or even a Mennonite member at one time. The story of their first baptisms is similar to that of the Dunkards. This group, located along the Susquehanna River, received the name, "River" Brethren to distinguish them from the other "Brethren."[18]

Drury gives the following account:

After the Isaac Long meeting, Mr. Boehm spent more and more of his time in preaching. He early appears as preaching regularly at three special places. He preached at Pequea [to "the Pequea brethren" of his own neighborhood], and at Donegal [to "the Conestoga brethren" in the Long neighborhood]. For the meetings at his own place, he fitted up the old house he had built, and was occupied by his father. The congregations were all principally made up of Mennonites. The congregation on the Susquehanna proved too conservative for Mr. Boehm's rapidly advancing apprehensions and methods. His enlarged associations with others whose history was so different from that of the Mennonites created difficulties. There were also objections to his liberal views and practice as to baptism. The congregation was made up of converted people; but from some diversity in the original elements of the congregation, as well as from other causes, peculiarities were developed and soon thereupon an aversion to change. While there was no ill feeling and no formal opposition, it was yet significant to Mr. Boehm that "he was too far in advance" for his services to be acceptable. This congregation some time afterwards, about 1776, became the mother congregation for the denomination known as River Brethren. They seem to have no tradition of the fact here given, and they sometimes give themselves a Dunker

16 Phebe Earle Gibbons, *The Pennsylvania Dutch and Other Essays* (Philadelphia, 1882), pp. 134-135.

17 Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (Cincinnati, 1951, p. 46).

18 *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference* (Telford, Pa., 1937), pp. 81-82.

rather than a Mennonite origin. The reason is doubtless their resemblance in some things to the Dunkers.[19]

Eli Engle (June 17, 1857-September 9, 1949), a River Brethren elder,[20] a great-grandson of Jokeli (Jacob) Engel, had in his library before his death a hymnbook, printed at Ephrata in 1795, with the following title page to the supplement: *Das Aller Neueste Harfenspiel oder Zugabe einiger Lieder auf Begehren von J. Engel, P. Eby, C. Grosch und anderer Mitglieder der vereinigten Bruderschaft in Pennsylvanien. (Zum erstenmal zusammen getragen).* The fact that Peter Eby of Manheim (Route 3) and Christopher Grosch of New Holland, active United Brethren men, were thus associated with Jacob Engle, the organizer of the Brethren in Christ, would clinch the Drury statement above. But we cannot be sure that J. Engle was in fact Jacob Engle, the Brethren in Christ founder.

In the Engle family history (1927) the account of the Engle family immigration includes the following material (given by me in paraphrase). "Anna Brackbill, daughter of Preacher Benedict Brackbill,[20a] who translated Schabalie's *The Wandering Soul* from Dutch to German, is said to have married Ulrich Engle. They came across on the Ship *Phoenix,* landing in Philadelphia, October 1, 1754. Accompanying were 24 other Mennonite persons. Of the 300 souls all told on the ship, some were 'Swissers.' Of the children, Jacob Engle, born November 5, 1753, was the only surviving baby on that shipload." The writer of the Engle history is certain that at least the mother was a Mennonite. A great future was prophesied for the child. His parents went to Strasburg and later to Wild Cat and here soon died, the father in 1757. An appropriate monument has been placed at his grave on the homestead, which was near the Marietta depot, but was later moved to Reich's Cemetery nearer Maytown. The mother Anna Brackbill, who died in 1767,

> had embraced the Anabaptist faith and was in Church fellowship, a Mennonite, as our early history relates, her father a minister of that Church. . . . The mother evidently embraced the Ana-Baptist faith earlier in her life before the birth of her son, Yokeli, as her mind and life were sufficiently exercised thereby to transmit to her

19 C. A. W. Drury, *History of the Church of the United Brethren* (Dayton, 1924), p. 103. Cf. Gibble, *op. cit.,* p. 32.

20 He was ordained in 1898 at Pequea Brethren in Christ Church and served there, although he lived in Mt. Joy after retirement from the farm, and is buried at Cross Roads. Christopher Grosch (1798-1829) lived one-half mile south of Blue Ball where Walter S. Martin, New Holland, R. 2, lives.

20a This writer does not believe that Anna was a daughter of Bishop Benedict Brackbill, who came across with a group in 1717. On the same ship with Ulrich Engel were an Abraham and Christian Brechbill. See Cf. R. B. Strassburger and W. J. Hinke, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* (Norristown, 1934), I, pp. 629, 632, 635. This could be the Abraham, who died intestate in 1775, and the Christian, who is mentioned herein later. They were Mennonites, also probably close kin to Anna Brechbill Engle. The Christian and Abraham Brechbill who settled in Franklin County were sons of Christian Brechbill (April 20, 1743-March 12, 1786), who was married on May 4, 1766, to Elizabeth Kreider (1743-?) of Tulpehocken.

son a strong as well as definite religious disposition of such an actual reality that his convictions of the Bible as he understood it made him among others of his day an Otterbein and Boehm among the strong religious leaders of his day.

* * *

When he was fourteen years old he was hired to a Mr. Witmer, who was a weaver by trade, to learn the trade. This same year he united with the old Mennonite Church. At eighteen years he was converted to God, experiencing the new birth, became dissatisfied with his baptism. He and Mr. Witmer visited a minister. They considered his faith questionable and returned home without letting the man know of their purpose. Later they visited another minister of the same persuasion asking him to baptize them by triune (*sic!*) immersion but wishing to stay aloof from the organization, which the minister refused. About this time the people and several among them done (*sic!*) as their fathers have done. In a secret way they baptize (*sic!*) each other and it was never discovered who was first baptized. This was about seven years after his conversion. Soon there were about twelve others who requested Jacob or Yokeli to baptize them. This Yokeli, son of Ulrich, immigrant, was the founder of the River Brethren Church, a branch of the Mennonite faith to which he and his family belonged. While in the beginning no attempt was made to form a separate organization (*sic!*). About 1773, such an organization was affected (*sic!*). Jacob or Jokeli, became the first Bishop of the new church. . . . Their conviction was of a water baptism, but on their way to the water, one of their number withdrew because of persecution. He was not baptized. After the baptism of the rest they had their first communion at the Yokeli Engel Home, near Lobata, Pennsylvania.[21]

C. Henry Smith's review of the Climenhaga history says the following:

The Brethren in Christ, originally known as River Brethren, had much in common in both faith and practice with the Mennonites and Dunkards throughout their history, due largely to the fact that one of their founders and for many years their outstanding leader, Jacob Engle, had originally been a Mennonite, while several of the cofounders had Dunkard connections. The beliefs and practices of the Brethren in Christ Church in its early history were so nearly identical with those of these two denominations that one cannot deny a very close connection.[22]

H. K. Ober, a Church of the Brethren historian, wrote:

We quote from their own records: "Tradition has it that somewhere about 1785 there were revival efforts made in the western part of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, conducted principally by the united efforts of Otterbein, Boehm, Bochran, the Engels, and others. These laborers were men formerly representing the Lutheran, Mennonite and Anabaptist faiths. . . ."[23]

Wilmer J. Eshleman says:

21 Morris M. Engle, *History of the Engle Family in America, 1754-1927* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 16-18. For full title page, see footnote 66, p. 307.

22 *MQR*, XX, 1945, p. 142.

23 H. M. J. Klein, *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, A History* (N. Y., 1924), I: p. 377. Bochran could be a typographical error. Could it be Jacob Bochman (*Lancaster County Historical Society Papers*, Vol. X (1906), p. 166)?

> The Brethren in Christ descended directly from Mennonite origin, but patterned their mode of worship after the early Church of the Brethren . . . Jacob Engle became dissatisfied with the mode of baptism as practiced by the Mennonite Church, as well as certain other departures from Anabaptist orthodoxy.[24]

Bishop Engle (probably Jacob M., 1825-1900) furnished (1883) the following account to Ellis and Evans' *History of Lancaster County:*

> A little more than a century since Jacob Engle, who came in his infancy from Switzerland, and who lived in Conoy Township near Bainbridge, was a member of the Old Mennonite Church. He became convinced that the members of that denomination lacked religious vitality, and in connection with his brother John and several others, established a stated prayer meeting for their mutual benefit. This little flock gradually increased in numbers, and after a time enjoyed the ministrations of a clergyman. The first place of worship was the house of the founder of the sect, now the residence of his grandson, Jacob M. Engle.[25]

C. N. Hostetter, a bishop in the Brethren in Christ Church and President of Messiah College wrote:

> The religious views of this earnest young man (Jacob Engel) were both eclectic and individual to the point that he was not satisfied to identify himself with any of the various churches or groups of worshippers in this area. He believed in instantaneous conversion and the religious emphasis of the pietists. He was committed to the pacifist and nonresistant position common to many of the Anabaptists and the Quakers. He believed that water baptism should be administered only by trine immersion and held to the separatist position with the nonconformist practices common to the Anabaptist and pietistic sects in eastern Pennsylvania. . . .[26]

In 1903 the *Biographical Annals of Lancaster County* reported the following under the "Engle Family":

> Jacob Engle, son of Ulrich, the immigrant, was the founder of the River Brethren Church, a branch of the Mennonite faith to which he and his family belonged. While in the beginning no attempt was made to form a separate organization, about 1776 such an organization was effected and Jacob became the first bishop of the new church. . . .[27]

Clarification

The ship *Phoenix* had come from Rotterdam, arriving in Philadelphia October 1, 1754, with "25 Menonists. Swissers. 300 souls, 554 Freights, [From] Franconia, Palatinate, Zweybreck."[28] These twen-

24 *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers,* Vol. LII (1948), No. 7, p. 174: "The River Brethren Denominations," by Wilmer J. Eshleman.

25 Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1883) p. 343.

26 *Internal Affairs Monthly Bulletin,* Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 10, "The Story of Jacob Engle and the Establishment of the Brethren in Christ Church," C. N. Hostetter, Jr., President of Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania.

27 *Biographical Annals of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania,* (n. p., 1903), p. 258.

28 Cf. Strassburger-Hinke, *op. cit.,* I, p. 633.

ty-five males above sixteen years of age included Joseph Wanger, the first deacon at the Bowmansville Mennonite Church in Lancaster County, Christian Geimmer (Gehman), senior and junior, Nicholas Shontz, and Bishop Hans Janz Jr., Jost Shoenower, Hans Burkhalter, Hans Moser, Johannes Geyman, Preacher Peter Guth, and Jacob Burckhart, all of whom as Mennonites settled in the Bowmansville-Allegheny section of Lancaster and Berks Counties in eastern Pennsylvania. Hans Uli Reist, Uhlrich Burkhalter, Uhllerich and Christian Newcomer, Abraham Brechbüehler, Christian and Daniel Fuhrer, Isaac Neuwenschwander, and Uhlrich Engel, with his wife Anna Brechbill, probably a sister of the Brechbills (variously spelled), were among the Mennonites on board. Tradition says that all the babies died at sea, except Ulrich Engel's Jacob, born November 5, 1753. Seven of the eight children in the group were children of Ulrich Engel, viz. Ulrich, Catharina, Anna, Hans, Barbara, Christina, and Maria. The Ulrich Engles probably settled first in the Bowmansville settlement and then went southwestward to Wild Cat, where they died, he before 1764 and she before 1765.[28a]

Isaac Neuenschwander went to Chestnut Hill, and Christen Brüchbül to Donegal. These with Engel had come from the Jura Mountains, via Zweibrücken, all refugees from the Emmenthal, and all Mennonites.[29] Both Johann and Ulrich Engel had left Röthenbach by 1745. Earlier a Hans Engel of Röthenbach, with a wife Margaret, possibly his, from Diessbach, and in 1672 a fifteen-year-old orphan, Fronia, were refugees. Another Margaret Engel, wife of Peter Rubel of Aeschlin, near Diessbach, was concealed in her home for a time.[30] The letter of 1755 written in Donegal, telling of the raids by Indians on the West Branch in Union County, Pennsylvania, which killed thirteen Mennonites and caused much suffering and loss in property, was signed by Ulrich Engel, Christen Brechbühl, and Isaac Neuenschwander and sent to the Mennonites in Röthenbach ("unser Leuten zu Roten Bühl").[31] Ulrich Engel was living in Corgémont in the Bishopric of Basel in 1745 (Gratz 194).

Ulrich Engel and Anna Brechbill's family then included at his death: Catharina, wife of the Peter Witmer of Manor who was Jacob Engel's employer and fellow founder of the new church; Anna Engle (1731-1805), married to Henry Grove; Ulrich, Jr., married to Magdalena Bixler; Deacon John (1745-1826), married to Elizabeth

28a Morris Engle (p. 5, 6) misinterprets the dates of the administrator's reports to the court for the estates of Ulrich (June 26, 1764) and Anna (Oct. 28, 1765, also 1767) as the death dates.

29 Cf. Delbert L. Gratz, *The Bernese Anabaptists* (Scottdale, 1953), p. 49.

30 Ernst Müller, *Geschichte der Bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld, 1895), pp. 201, 248, 249, 278, 254. 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 365-366.

Schrock, sister of Jacob's wife; Barbara (1748-1783), married to Dr. Benjamin Musser of Turkey Hill; Christianna (1750-1805), married to Jacob Musser; and Bishop Jacob (1753-1832), married to Veronica Schrock, daughter of his employer. Maria had died single earlier.[32]

The Engle family history did not name Ulrich Engel as a Mennonite, but Deacon Harvey Horning of Bowmansville had in his possession a document corroborating the fact that he was a leading Mennonite on the trip across the ocean.[33] The letter published in translation elsewhere in this issue of the REVIEW, now in the archives of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, establishes the fact that ancestor Ulrich was a Mennonite and possibly a deacon, and that Hans Engle, of whatever relationship, possibly his father, was an ordained minister. In the same archives is another letter written later by a Jacob Martin in Switzerland to Daniel Gehman (deacon at Bowmansville 1774-1792): "Therefore we beg kindly that you look to this matter, so that it can be exchanged hereafter, so that it may go to its proper place, and that it go not as it did with the Engels."[34]

Was Jacob Martin referring to the earlier letter regarding the Engels or another later lost letter? Dr. Fayette C. Eshleman of Hazelton, Pa., found a passage among the Bowmansville papers which says:

> This was done by the children and grandchildren of the Engles, but due to the rate of exchange and the different countries through which it had to go, by the time it reached Switzerland, there was not much left.[35]

The background is further explained by C. Henry Smith:

> The reason for this large emigration from Erguel in 1754 is due both to a lively propaganda that was being carried on just at this time by active emigration agents, as well as to certain social conditions. Since the Mennonites were industrious and progressive farmers they aroused the jealousy of their poorer native neighbors. These consequently proposed to drive out the Mennonites. There was also a rather steady emigration of Mennonites to America from the former Bishopric of Basel during the period from 1750 to 1850. This was due to the fact that the frugal and industrious Mennonites increased greatly in numbers, while the estates and the little farms that they cultivated did not. The surplus population was forced to emigrate, but for a long time they exchanged letters with their relatives and friends in their old home.[36]

32 Cf. Lancaster Deeds, L. 233, Engle Genealogy, and *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 52 (1948), pp. 203-205.

33 As later successor of Deacon Joseph Wenger and Daniel Gehman, Harvey Horning has numerous letters and papers, which Aaron M. Weber, Noah G. Good and others have scanned. All of these are now in the archives of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society at Salunga, Pa.

34 *Ibid.* On Ramseier and Engle of the first letter and Jacob Martin of the second see Delbert Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptists* (Scottdale, 1953), pp. 80-81; also Aaron M. Weber papers.

35 Quoted by Wilmer J. Eshleman in *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 52 (1948).

36 C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania* (Norristown, 1929), p. 216n.

Further evidence of the Mennonite background of the Brethren in Christ is found in the following facts. Christian Rupp and Jacob Strickler (1765-1841), the first York County Brethren in Christ bishops, were of Mennonite extraction, and John Winger (d. 1828), the first Brethren in Christ minister in the Bertie, Ontario, district, was a son of the Mennonite Christian Wenger[37] (d. before 1764) who was born north of Manheim on the farm now belonging to Phares Moyer, Jr. John and the next three bishops in the Welland, Ontario, area were Wingers. The first Wengers (same name) were Mennonites.[38]

The letter of May 16, 1853, asking Matthias Brinser to abandon the first church building the River Brethren ever had, is signed by the following:[39]

Jacob Strickler	Christian Musser	Daniel Engel
David Stoner	John Engel	Henry S. Engel
John J. Gisch	Henry Engel	Joseph Lehman
Jacob Hostetter	Henry Musser	Daniel Engel
Jacob M. Engel	Benjamin E. Musser	John N. Kraybill
Daniel Grove	John B. Engel	J. B. Hoffer
Michael Hoffman	Isaac Herschey	Jacob S. Engel
John Hostetter	Christian Hoffman	Jacob Grider
Benjamin Martin	Jacob E. Crider	

The paternal ancestors of these men in pioneer days, without exception, unless it be Hoffer, were Mennonites.

Some years ago the writer spent an afternoon with Preacher Eli Engle of Mt. Joy (1857-1949), both he and his wife being great-grandchildren of Ulrich Engel, Jr., the brother of Jacob Engel, the founder. Eli, himself a Brethren in Christ elder since 1898 at the Pequea Brethren in Christ meetinghouse, was an authority on the Brethren in Christ history and the Engle family. When the writer asked him

37 On the ship *Patience* (John Brown, captain) were Johannes Wenger, born 1705, and son Hans Jr., born 1732, with Stephen and Christian Wenger, qualified September 16, 1748 (Strassburger-Hinke, I: p. 386). Hans Sr., settled at Jonestown. Among the 400 Palatines on the Ship *Saint Andrew* (James Abercrombie, Master) who qualified September 9, 1749, were Michael Wagner and Christian Wenger. The former, as Wagner, Wegner, and later Wenger, settled west of Mastersonville; the latter settled on the present Phares Moyer Jr. farm north of Manheim. The latter applied for a patent, but it was not given until after his death to his only son, John. This John Winger went to Bertie, Ontario, about 1785. Although the Hans Sr., Michael, and Christian brothers were undoubtedly Mennonites, according to Norman W. Nauman, Wenger genealogist, this John became a River Brethren bishop. His successors in the bishop office were a direct line of descendants for four generations: John, then Peter, Abraham (1829-1904), and Jonas. Cf. L. J. Burkholder, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-250, and George Cober, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren in Christ Church, known as Tunkers in Canada* (Gormley, 1953), pp. 5 f.

38 According to Norman W. Nauman, Manheim R. 3, a paper was found with Isaac Wenger of the Cove in Franklin County, asserting that three brothers came from Switzerland to Lancaster County. These three brothers, Hans, Michael and Christian, had a fall-out on religion. The Hans line, mostly Mennonites, held to the original spelling. Christian who died between 1761 and 1764 changed to Winger, and Michael, living northwest of Mastersonville, changed to Wegner.

39 John K. Miller, who was born in 1859 and married in 1881 to Elizabeth D. Engle of the Jacob of Ulrich Engle line, wrote "The River Brethren—A Historical Sketch," in *The Pennsylvania German,* Vol. VII (1906), pp. 17 ff. At the time of the decree Brinser declared that they would see the unwisdom of their move.

for his opinion on the origin of his group, he replied: "Climenhaga was wrong in not giving us a Mennonite origin."

Here is my interpretation of the origin. Jacob Engel probably worked for his brother-in-law Peter Witmer,[40] then John Funk,[41] and later his father-in-law Jacob Schock, as Wilmer Eshleman surmises.[42] The writer questions whether Jacob was baptized at fourteen by the Mennonites at that time, but since most of the children of the refugee Mennonite families from Europe entered the church, I do not doubt the fact of his baptism.[43] The date for the beginning of the Brethren in Christ in 1776 (Drury and Prowell's date) or even a bit later, would give more time for Jacob's emergence from the German ferment.[44] The question of immersion was a live issue in Lancaster County at that time. Not only were the Ephrata Cloisters the seat of an immersionist group, but the Dunkards (Tunkers, later called the Church of the Brethren) brought their entire European membership to southeastern Pennsylvania in 1719 and 1729, and by 1770 Brumbaugh claims 65 Dunkards by name in the White Oak District, most of whom were originally from the Mennonite constituency of the present Hernley and Gantz congregations, north of Manheim.[45]

"Inquiring for immersion," John K. Miller says, "they went to Otterbein and the German Baptists [Dunkard]. John wanted, however, to remain Mennonite."[46] Some claim that Engel and his associates contacted the Ephrata Cloister group. George R. Prowell[47] claims that they contacted Elder George Miller (1722-1798) of the Great Swatara Dunkard congregation. Brumbaugh claims it was Elder Christian Longenecker (1732-1808)[48] whom they sought out. Probably they contacted numerous persons before they made the move for a new denomination.

The first step in the new direction was that after this Jacob

40 Morris M. Engle, *History of the Engle Family in America, 1754-1927*, p. 18. Peter Witmer was of the Michael line in Manor Township.

41 *Op. cit., p.* 61.

42 *Lancaster County Historical Society Papers:* "The River Brethren Denominations" by Wilmer J. Eshleman, Vol. 52 (1948), pp. 203-205.

43 The Bishop Jacob Hostetter (1774-1865) of Manheim correspondence in the Archives of the Mennonite Church at Goshen College, contains two references to converts at the age of twelve. It was to meet this thrust that the Mennonites are "cold, formal and dead" that Bishop Christian Burkholder of Groffdale wrote *Anrede an die Jugend* in 1790 (first published in 1804).

44 This German ferment in Lancaster County, in addition to the one mentioned in the first paragraph (Otterbein, Reformed, now United Brethren), helped to ordain Francis Asbury to the Methodist bishop office, Dec. 26, 1784, in Baltimore. Working side by side with the Methodists, the Boehm followers were called German Brethren and German Methodists. W. H. Daniels, *Illustrated History of Methodism* (1887); Israel D. Rupp, *History of All Denominations of the United States* (Harrisburg, 1844), chapter on Methodism.

45 M. G. Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Mt. Morris, 1899), pp. 318-319.

46 Cf. footnote 39 above.

47 George R. Prowell, *History of York County* (Chicago, 1907), Vol. I, p. 143.

48 Cf. *History of the Church of the Brethren* (1915), p. 383.

Engel and Peter Witmer baptized each other. Twelve more persons were ready for baptism, but one withdrew. The group included "John Funk of York County, Gnauss, Rohrer, Barbara Heisey, and a Lichty and wife. After this service they held the love feast in an upper room of [Jacob] Engel's home [at Lobata]."[49] When Gnauss, a non-Mennonite, was informed that the beard was obligatory, but the mustache must be left off, he later withdrew. One mile west of Schock's Mills, the group then organized with Jacob Engel as bishop. The group gradually grew in size, accessions mostly being persons of Mennonite origin, not only in the home district and in Montgomery County, but at Bertie, Ontario, in York County and Franklin County in Pennsylvania, and in Ashland County, Ohio,[50] to mention a few.[51]

Since Prowell claimed that his facts were "from documents written at the time and still in existence," his witness should be authentic. He gives the time of temporary organization as 1776 and the permanent organization as soon after 1784, when "the celebrated evangelist [Martin Boehm] conducted a noted revival in Donegal Township," which the leaders of the movement enthusiastically attended. Thus the dates would be about 1776 and about 1785, which gives them time to move from a Mennonite background, as generally admitted, through the United Brethren transition which is reported by both Drury and Prowell.[52]

A part of the dilemma on dates is due to the fact that as Israel D. Rupp writes:

> They keep neither written nor printed records touching their ecclesiastical proceedings; in the absence of these, oral history and tradition alone can be relied on as to the precise time of the church organization and who were the first ministers among them.[52a]

This may also account for the fact that Climenhaga gives no table of elders, ministers and deacons, mentioning but a very few and manifesting a deplorable dearth of dates for the ones he does list.

Go with me to Conoy Township, called Donegal prior to 1838 and West Donegal until 1842. Leaving Maytown for Stackstown, we pass the beautiful Reich's Evangelical Congregational cemetery on the right elevation. Here are buried scores of the Engles of Brethren

49 Cf. 39 above.

50 Cf. John Umble in *MQR*, XIX (1945), p. 42.

51 In 1880, Prowell says, there were 80 ministers, 100 congregations, 9,000 members in the United States, mostly in southern Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Kansas. In Lancaster and York Counties there were 300 families.

52 Cf. Bernard E. Fogle, *Martin Boehm, Co-Founder of the Church of the United Brethren*, p. 14, a B.D. thesis (1955) at the United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio; and also *The Evangelical Visitor, Fiftieth Anniversary* Vol. L (1937), p. 40.

Prowell states that some advocate that this church had its origin in Germany in 1705 and it has been "published time and again in encyclopedias, but is nevertheless inaccurate." He gives the second date as 1786, p. 143.

52a Rupp, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

in Christ background. Jockeli and his generation were first buried on his farm. Here not only Engle genealogy but also church history can get clarification. Continuing to Stackstown (or Lobata) on the Conoy Creek, named for the Ganawese or Conoy Indians, we see the John Engle farm directly across the creek. Following the creek upstream, we arrive at the Engle mill, now in ruins. The stone declares that Jacob N. and Elizabeth Engle built the same in 1855. Behind the mill is the one hundred acre farm of Guy S. Hoffman. The house carries the same initials and the year 1868. Apparently numerous fires have wreaked havoc on this farm. This was the original farm of Jockeli Engel. The serene Conoy Creek steals along unnoticed near the original buildings. Either this farm or the Henry Engle farm on the same stream near Rowenna was the site of the first baptisms, not the Susquehanna River as some have said. I would lean toward the Conoy site. At least this was the home of the founder of the Brethren in Christ Church. It was near the Susquehanna River, two miles by road, and his first converts were from this general area. They were thus appropriately called "River Mennonites" or "River Brethren." There were apparently no Church of the Brethren personal connections. However the adoption of immersion and the wearing of the beard clearly suggest Dunkard influence, since neither of these two points were ever practiced by any Mennonites in Lancaster County, nor by any other group in this area except the Dunkards and their offshoot the Ephrata Seventh Day Baptists or Dunkards, although the Amish in Eastern Lancaster County, present since at least 1740, had the required beard.

The Later History of the Church

Bishop Jacob Engel, after a record bishop service of fifty-five or more years, was succeeded by Jacob Strickler[52b] (April 1, 1768-January 17, 1842) of Stony Brook. By the time of his death the membership had extended through colonization into Dauphin, York, and Franklin Counties. They were very distinctive in dress and mannerisms, remaining farmers or claiming allied rural occupations.

52b Jacob Strickler was the grandson of the Mennonite Ulrich (died Nov. 1, 1750), the October 8, 1737, immigrant to eastern York County. Cf. H. M. Strickler, *Forerunners; a History or Genealogy of the Strickler Families* (Harrisonburg, 1925). Bishop Jacob married Catherine Cormeny (April 2, 1765-March 28, 1841). They had been blessed with ten children, including preacher Joseph. They are buried in the beautiful Springgettsbury Strickler Cemetery two blocks east of the original Strickler Mennonite meetinghouse, between Wrightsville and Hellam. Jacob Strickler Jr., his successor, is the son of the Jacob (1755-1859) of immigrant Henry's line. He settled southeast of Columbia, and some of the family settled in the same area where immigrant Ulrich settled. This Jacob Jr. (May 15, 1788-June 22, 1859) married Nancy Gerber (November 2, 179-September 28, 1884) and is buried in the same Mennonite cemetery. (Eshleman calls him a son of the former and says he was born in 1799). The Strickler Genealogy has none of the numerous Jacobs of the area born in this year. The son of the former, Jacob Jr. (1788-1839), married Nancy Meyers (1792-1884). Ulrich, the immigrant, is buried with his kin on the York County Alms House farm, in a private Strickler farm cemetery.

Strickler was succeeded in Lancaster County by Bishop John I. Gisch (January 12, 1774-January 11, 1871), who had married Elizabeth Engle (October 29, 1775-September 8, 1847), a daughter of Deacon John, the son of immigrant Ulrich. He was a son of Mathias Gisch, immigrant to West Donegal in September 18, 1733.[53] At the same time Jacob Hostetter (1799-1888) was ordained bishop for the Pequea-Manor district. For York County Jacob Strickler, Jr. succeeded his distant relative Christian Hoover (January 9, 1783-August 12, 1867), son of the Mennonite preacher immigrant Henry Hoover (b. 1759), who moved from Lebanon County to Pleasant Hall, Franklin County, in 1800.

Schisms in the Brethren in Christ

The first schism was a Conservative Old Order one, now popularly called "Yorkers." In 1843 Bishop Jacob Strickler Jr. of York County with his following in York County and a few in Lancaster County withdrew "for orthodoxy." These met thereafter at Christian Musser's home on Chestnut Hill and by 1860 had ordained Jacob S. Hostetter (1832-1920) as Bishop. [54]

In 1854 Bishop Christian Hoover of Franklin County was declared also to be "too orthodox," and his group was dismissed by the Bishop John I. Gisch group of Conoy-Donegal. They included twelve families in the Waynesboro District and fifteen in the Chambersburg area. These were families with such names as Hoover, Brechbill, Myers, Wenger, Sollenberger, Hawbaker, Martin, Jacobs, Hykes, and Shank,[55] These two York and Franklin County groups later united and are called Old Order River Brethren, but in York and Lancaster Counties they also bear the name "Yorkers." As late as 1868 there were efforts made to get the Old Order River Brethren and the main body of the Brethren in Christ together, but to no avail.[56]

The original Old Order River Brethren are today found in four groups, with a total membership of 340. The most conservative horse and carriage group have as their Bishops Jacob L. Horst of Elizabethtown, Christian Meyers of Pleasant Hill, and Daniel M.

53 Cf. I. J. Hamaker, *Matthias Gisch of White Oak* (Lynchburg, Va., 1940).

54 Jacob S. Hostetter of Chestnut Hill was a second cousin of the Mennonite Bishop John Hostetter of Adams County, and also a great-grandson of the Mennonite immigrant Bishop Jacob Hostetter of Engleside and of Ann, wife of Bishop Benjamin Hershey, of "One Mile west of Lancaster Town." He lived near the Chestnut Hill Mennonite meetinghouse, and he with his two wives is buried in the Musser Cemetery near by.

55 These facts were furnished by Simon B. Myers, a prominent Old Order River Brethren of St. Thomas, Pennsylvania. He also says, "I have great respect for the Mennonites, as my ancestors were mostly Swiss Mennonites."

56 Bishop John M. Strickler possesses a translation of a letter he transcribed from the German, written under date of March 18, 1868, from Bishop Jacob Strickler Jr., of York County, to Bishop Christian Brechbill, Christian Hoover's successor in Franklin County. In a marvelous afternoon fellowship, I had a real insight not only into the Old Order River Brethren Church today, but into the problems over the years in trying to keep a pure church in adverse cultural surroundings. The figures of Aaron S. Hostetter have been confirmed.

Meyers of Greencastle, with a total of 171 members. In 1920 a small group split off from them led by Simon T. Musser of Lancaster, which today numbers 37. In 1929 the Jacob Keller group separated, desiring to have automobiles. This group, now numbering 92, has bishops Daniel M. Hawbaker of Greencastle, Jacob Etter of Bradford, Ohio, and Christ Bricker of Dallas Center, Iowa. In 1948 another group separated, led by Bishop John M. Strickler of Columbia, which today has 40 members.[57]

The Brinser Schism

Matthias Brinser (May 10, 1795-July 27, 1889), a grandson of the 1749 immigrant Christian Brinser of Baden, Germany, who lived on the Brinser homestead three miles southeast of Middletown and four miles west of Elizabethtown, was the founder of another schism. The farm, now owned by Paul M. Garver, contains the Brinser God's Acre on the northwestern elevation. An outside bake oven is mute evidence of the love feasts held at this house. A summer house also attests to the sleeping quarters for the brethren coming from a distance. Matthias Brinser was a nephew of the bishop of the local River Brethren Church, John I. Gisch, at the time the senior bishop in the group. Matthias was ordained to the ministry in 1829 and later as bishop. He was a fluent speaker and in demand at funerals and other services. In February 1853 the local brotherhood decided to build a meetinghouse 25 x 40 ft., using weatherboarding vertical and stripped. This was the first meetinghouse for the denomination. The River Brethren Church, after two councils, finally expelled Bishop Matthias and his group.[58] The meetinghouse was built one mile south of the Geyer United Brethren Church, beyond the Railroad Arch. This served the group until the change in the Railroad Curve necessitated in 1893 the move to an adjoining tract, when the Hillsdale United Zion's Children's meetinghouse, 50 x 35 ft. was erected, in use until 1940. It is now occupied by John Konecny.

57 Aaron S. Hostetter, Lancaster, R. 2, and Bishop John M. Strickler, are responsible for the correctness of the dates and figures. After weighing the evidence, I lean toward the date of 1843 in York County and the date of 1854 in Franklin County. Without concrete evidence, there are those that lean toward the first date for both, the latter date for both, and the two dates.

The first recorded separate love feast in York County was in 1864 at Elias Good's. In Franklin County, beginning with 1858 at Breckbill's, the love feast followed annually at the homes of John Breckbill, Jacob Hykes, Daniel and John Meyer, John Sollenberger, Jacob Wngert, John Shenk, Henry Shenk, Daniel Jacobs and Abraham Hoover. This gives an idea of the ones who were involved in the division in 1854. The Keller people had their first separate love feast at Joseph Hawbaker's in 1931.

58 The Council Meeting at Jacob Engel's in Conoy during the summer of 1855 rendered the following decision: "This writing is to show to thee, Matthias Brinser, that a decision has been reached in unity, that with the advice which was given at Jacob Engel's shall be carried out with thee; it says: 'If he hear not the congregation, let him be a gentile and publican." And thou hast not heard, therefore thou canst no longer be a brother until it be known and the congregation has failed in not carrying out at the beginning the advice which thou hast not heard." This decision must have been rendered by the same group which made the 1853 step in this direction. Cf. John K. Miller, *op. cit.* above.

After Bishop Matthias Brinser was expelled, three other Brethren in Christ ministers joined him, namely, Daniel Kieffer Sr. of Hanover in Dauphin County, Christian Wenger of Lebanon County, and John Firestone also of Lebanon County. By a special revelation Brinser accepted the visit of Jacob Pfautz[59] (March 24, 1807-March 15, 1898), a Church of the Brethren layman of Vogansville, and Henry Grumbein (October 2, 1812-July 28, 1889), an Evangelical local preacher from Buffalo Springs, Lebanon County, later also of Hahnstown. In 1857 these two men formed the Grumbine Group or the United Zion's Children's section of the Brinser movement.[60] Since they had no Brethren in Christ background, they are not a true part of the historic group. The cornerstone of the Hahnstown meetinghouse, where both leaders served and are buried, states "The Church of the New Brethren, built by Jacob Pfautz, 1868. Rebuilt by the United Zion 1909." The bishops of this group today are Peter N. Gress, Rheinholds, Jacob Lehman, Manheim, and Daniel Sipling, Elizabethtown. The groups are found in Lancaster, Dauphin and Lebanon counties, with a total membership of 926. They have two missionaries in North Bihar, India, and one in Rhodesia. They also operate an Old People's Home north of Lititz.

Later Development of the Main Body

After the rough early fifties, the church of the Brethren in Christ, a name they assumed in 1861, scattered by colonization and evangelism until in 1959 they are distributed across the United States with a total membership of 7,591 in the six conferences, each with a bishop overseer. In the *Atlantic* Conference, which includes Lancaster County and the East with Virginia, the membership is 2,099; *Allegheny,* including all of Pennsylvania north and west of Lancaster County, has 2,362; *Central* in the North Central States has 882; *Midwest,* mostly in Iowa, Kansas,[61] Oklahoma has 422; *Pacific* in New Mexico, California and Oregon has 688; and *Canada,* mostly in On-

59 Jacob Pfautz married Sallie Kemper (January 18, 1812-March 30, 1885). She and Henry Grumbein's wife Catharine (October 3, 1814-April 17, 1879) are buried with their husbands in the Hahnstown United Zion cemetery.

60 Cf. Climenhaga. The official name was United Zion's Children Church until the early 1950's. A merger committee, now called Committee on Inter-Church Fellowship, is bringing the Brethren in Christ and the United Zion Churches closer together in spiritual fellowship, Christian education, missionary work, social work, Sunday school and youth activities and higher education. The complete merger has not been approved by all concerned. Consequently no centennial was observed in 1957, for it was felt that they should try to heal the wound rather than accentuate it. Cf. *Minutes of the General Conference of the United Zion Church,* held at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, May 24, 1958, especially pp. 12-14.

61 From Dauphin County in 1878 David J. Eisenhauer (1863-1942) with Ida Stoever, his wife (1862-1946), his father, Jacob Frederick (1826-1906), and grandfather Frederick (1794-1884, moved to Abilene, Kansas. The latter two were Brethren in Christ. The former were the parents of Dwight D. Eisenhower, our President, who as a boy went to the Brethren in Christ Sunday School at Abilene. Hans Nicholas Eisenhauer, born 1741, was the grandfather of Frederick (above).

tario, has 1,137. The total church property is $4,532,847 and the total annual operating expenditure is $1,131,641.87.[62]

The group has three educational institutions: Upland College, Upland, California; Niagara Christian College, Fort Erie, Ontario; and Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania. Their charitable institutions are Mt. Carmel Orphanage, Morrison, Illinois; Messiah Home, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Messiah Children's Home, Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania. The E.V. Publishing House at Nappanee, Indiana, publishes their official organ, *The Evangelical Visitor,* started in 1887. Their mission fields are in Rhodesia, India, Cuba, Japan and the Near East. In 1957 they adopted the overseer system, retiring most of their bishops. The present overseers are A. C. Burkholder, Upland, California; E. J. Swalm, Duntroon, Ontario; A. M. Climenhaga, Bulawayo, Rhodesia; Henry A. Ginder, Manheim, Pennsylvania; C. J. Ulery, Springfield, Ohio; and Charlie B. Byers, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.[63]

Let us describe the group as a whole, as the account in I. D. Rupp's volume did one hundred years ago:

> They are devoted, laborious and useful men, apparently given much to self-denial. The habits of both ministers and lay members are simple and unostentatious. They are simple, plain and unassuming in their deportment, zealous in maintaining what all should, what they believe to be the truth; they still manifest an unusual degree of kindness and Christian forbearance towards those who differ very essentially from them in matters of faith.[64]

Here are a people who, we will say with Prowell, "are strictly nonresistant, but upright and honorable in the highest degree";[65] we do well to know them.

62 Cf. *Eighty-Eighth Annual General Conference Minutes of the Brethren in Christ Church,* (1958), their official publication.

63 Cf. Report named in previous footnote. This lists the three counties of Lancaster, Dauphin, and Lebanon six retired bishops in addition to the Overseer, Bishop Henry G. Ginder, 29 ministers and 23 deacons, in the Brethren in Christ Church, and in the United Zion's Children, three bishops, 22 ministers and 23 deacons. Both groups practice trine immersion forward. The Brethren in Christ *Annual Report* (above) lists six Assigned Bishops, 22 Honorary Bishops, nine Bishops Emeriti, 294 Ministers, 155 Assigned Deacons, two Deaconesses, and 51 Honorary Deacons. The latter list includes the 22 ministers of the United Zion's Children; so the Berthren in Christ number of ministers should be 272. The bishops and deacons are listed separately.

64 I. D. Rupp, *op. cit.,* p. 557.

65 Cf. footnote 47 above.

66 The full title page of Morris Engle's book (see footnotes 21 and 40) is: *The Engle History and Family Records of Dauphin and Lancaster Counties. The Numerous Lineal Descendants of Ulrich Engel. Short Sketches of Engle Families not Related. A Sketch of the Arrival and Record of the Origin of the Brethren in Christ Church of Which a Large Number of the Descendants are Members. Compiled by Morris M. Engle, Historian, Hummelstown, Pa.*

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND RESEARCH NOTES

A SWISS MENNONITE DOCUMENT OF 1754 BEARING ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE ORIGIN OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

H. S. Bender

The uncertainty as to the Mennonite background of Jacob Engel, the founder of the Brethren in Christ Church (*ca.* 1776), can now be definitively clarified as a result of the discovery of an important original document of April 1754, issued by the Mennonite congregation in the territory of the Bishopric of Basel, Switzerland, from which the Engel family emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1754. This document, handed down in the possession of the succession of deacons in the Bowmansville (Pa.) Mennonite congregation in Lancaster County, beginning with the first deacon Joseph Wenger, is now deposited in the archives of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society at Salunga, Pa. It is herewith presented in translation through the courtesy of Ira D. Landis, custodian of the archives and the discoverer of the document.

Text of the Document

Be it hereby known that several of our people here in the Bishopric of Basel Territory have decided to travel to America. Among these there were several poor ones who appealed to the ministers and deacons (*Eltisten*) of the church in the above Bishopric for support. Therefore it has been decided by the ministers and the deacons to help as follows.

Hans Burkholder	180	
Jost Schonauwer	180	(Sign)
Barbara Schänck	160	
Catdrina Baumgarner	120	
Madlena Neüwenschwander	100	
Total	740	(Kronen written as a sign)

Which is Seven Hundred Forty Kronen.

Which sum the ministers and deacons resident at the above Bishopric have delivered and paid to Ulrich Engell in cash money and shall be turned over to the above-mentioned persons. The above-named Hans Burkholder, Jost Schonauwer, Barbara Schänck, Catdrina Baumgardner, Madlena Neüwenschwander, promise, when they arrive in America in Benzelvania and by the blessing of God they or their [families] can accomplish it, to secure and to pay the above sums with the condition however that this is well arranged and shall be for the poor there. As an aid to remembering this at all times we have made two copies of this, the same word for word, and the ministers and deacons have signed as follows.

Made in Munscher (?). One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty-four and written on Aberill 19, 1754.

Preachers (*Diener zum Wort*)	Deacons (*Eltiste Diener*)
Peter Oberlly	Cristen Aschliman
Hans Hahbeger	Peter Ramseier
Peter Ramseier	Hans Domi (?)
Hans Engell	

The back of the sheet bears the following title:

Accord between ministers and deacons and those travelling from here in America.

It is clear from the document that Ulrich Engel, the father of Jacob Engel, was a respected member of the Mennonite congregation in the Bishopric of Basel, a man in whom the congregation had sufficient confidence to entrust into his hands the sum of 760 kronen loaned to the five impoverished members among the emigrants to Pennsylvania. The passenger list of the Ship *Phoenix,* which landed at Philadelphia on October 1, 1754, includes the names of Ulrich Engel, Hans Burkholder, and Jost Schonauwer [no female names are given in the list], and states that 25 "Menonists Swissers" were on board. The "Hans Engell" listed among the preachers signing the document for the congregation was undoubtedly a relative of Ulrich Engel, though of what degree is not known. One report states that Ulrich's father was a preacher, without giving any evidence. In any case it is clear that the Engel family from which Jacob Engel descends was a Mennonite family in Switzerland.

The document is of further interest as casting light on the emigration of Swiss Mennonites to Pennsylvania in 1754, particularly in showing that the Swiss congregations gave financial assistance to emigrants.

The agreement regarding this assistance was prepared in two original copies, one of which was quite properly delivered, by Ulrich Engel no doubt, to the deacon of the Mennonite congregation in which the immigrants settled. Ira Landis has shown that this was the Bowmansville congregation, and that the deacon was Joseph Wenger. (See the Landis article in the current issue of the REVIEW.)

The Trail of the Black Walnut. By G. Elmore Reaman. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1957. Exclusive distributor in the U.S.: Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa. Pp. xx plus 256. $5.00

Inside the front cover of *The Trail of the Black Walnut* is a two-page map. On it are two trails, one leading from Reading, Pennsylvania, northward to Rochester, New York, and then westward to Waterloo, Ontario, and the second leading from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, northward to Buffalo, New York, and across to St. Catharines, Ontario, where it joins the first trail and follows it to Waterloo County. The major part of the book is concerned with the Pennsylvania Germans who followed these trails in their search for new soil rich enough to grow black walnut trees, which they found in Ontario.

The story, however, in spite of the title is concerned with more than the Pennsylvania Germans and with a much larger area than Waterloo County, Ontario. In fact, it is a history of the early German settlements in Ontario and of the cultural influences these settlers have contributed to this province. The justification for the book lies in the fact that the major studies of early Ontario history had been directed towards the settlements of the British who came to this area after the War of 1812 to the neglect of the original settlers who had come to Upper Canada earlier. These early settlers divided themselves into two groups, the resisters, consisting of Lutherans, Reformed, and Huguenots; and the non-resisters, comprising Moravians, Mennonites, Amish, Dunkards, and Quakers. The author characterizes them in this manner, "But whether resisters or non-resisters, one finds that with the exception of the Quakers (who belonged to England), to a large extent they originated in Holland, South Germany, France, Rhine Palatinate, or Switzerland, and had important things in common: a love of the land, a thorough knowledge of agriculture, deep religious convictions, and a rugged individualism. These characteristics, developed in Europe, were carried into Pennsylvania and New York State and later into Ontario" (p. xx).

Contrary to the common opinion which thinks of Ontario before the War of 1812 as having "only a garrison or two and a few British and French settlers scattered about here and there along the Great Lakes and the waterways," the settlers had much earlier come "in large numbers, and many brought money, chattels, and animals, together with the experience and knowledge necessary to make good in a pioneer situation" (p. xiii). The two-page map inside the back cover shows by counties the dates of the arrival of the first settlers. They reached Welland and Lincoln counties, near Niagara, as early as 1776. By 1793 all of the counties on the north shores of lakes Erie and Ontario as well as these along the north bank of the St. Lawrence had settlers, and by 1800 the inland county of Waterloo received its first settlers. In his treatment of these early settlements, Dr. Reaman presents detailed history to prove his point concerning the early dates of these settlements, dealing specifically with the first families in these areas. Those interested in family history will especially appreciate this contribution. Very helpful in this field of interest are his appendices, which contain charts of the locations and dates of the first settlements in Upper Canada. In some instances the religion of the settler is given. The first Mennonites identified in the tables are the Kulps, Albrights, Hahns, and Toffords, who came to Lincoln County in 1786. On page 65 the reader is informed that there were eight families in this party, all from Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

The chapter headings are "Backgrounds in Europe," "Migration to and Settlements in America," "Migration to and Settlement in Upper Canada," "Contributions to Canadian Agriculture," "Contributions to Canadian Cultural Life," and "Some Conclusions." The longest chapter is the third, with eighty-six pages. The Foreword is written by Thomas B. Costain and "A Nod from Pennsylvania" by Arthur D. Graeff. The book has footnotes, an index, and illustrations.

Dr. Graeff informs the reader that for a number of years Dr. Reaman and Dr. B. Mabel Dunham have been regarded "as the outstanding personalities in Canada in the field of Pennsylvania German studies." To this characterization Dr. Graeff adds, "His frequent visits to Pennsylvania; his familiarity with the sources of information; his wide acquaintanceship with the scholars in the field and his unflagging devotion to his own country all combine to blend the objective and subjective approach to his study. His skill as a writer and his standing in the field of letters add authenticity, charm, and beauty to his contribution as recorded in this volume." The author was born in Concord, Ontario. His parents were of Swiss and English background. Trained in Canada and the United States, he received his doctorate at Cornell University. He has written thirteen books and many magazine articles and is an experienced radio and platform lecturer. For a number of years he was a teacher of English but is now Dean of Men and Lecturer in Public Speaking at Waterloo College, University of Western Ontario.

Throughout Dr. Reaman's study there are references to the Mennonites of Ontario. Because the Mennonites and Dunkards (Brethren in Christ) settled in groups and because they selected their ministers from their own circles, their communities were on a solid basis for the perpetuation of their group life. These brotherhoods therefore were less subject to secularizing influences and sectarian disintegration than were the settlements of other ethnic groups and as a result they have best preserved the Pennsylvania traditions. In their communities one can consequently trace the development of Pennsylvania culture and its influence upon the folkways of Ontario and compare it to what exists in other areas of Ontario, where the residents are no longer aware of their ethnic and cultural background. Among the cultural contributions of the Pennsylvania Germans, Dr. Reaman mentions many arts and crafts which can be "traced to the Pennsylvania German, such as the making of rugs, quilts, and furniture. Our food menus have been enriched by many dishes and our landscape by many an attractive bank barn, a stone house, or a brick house set in a carefully kept yard with a vegetable and fruit garden close by."

In his last chapter the author lists and distinguishes six kinds of Mennonites. These along with other sectarian groups in Ontario the author feels have helped perpetuate the ideal of religious freedom through their championing of "the right of the individual to live and worship according to his way of thinking, unobstructed by Church or State."

Dr. Reaman has brought together a rich collection of data covering the early years of Ontario and has admirably organized his materials. This book will be appreciated not only by historians but also by the general public which will find in its pages much material relating to frontier life as well as to the social, economic, and religious aspects of Canadian culture.

Goshen, Indiana MELVIN GINGERICH

Our Hymns of Praise. Edited by J. Mark Stauffer. Scottdale, Pa., Herald Press, 1958. 161 pages and index. $2.50.

For many years it has been customary to assume that music for children must be scaled down. "To their level of appreciation," we adults have decreed from our presumably exalted heights; and in the name of this desire to "meet the children at their level," triviality often has been confused with simplicity, trash has been substituted for quality, and the poor songs the children have been forced to sing frequently have been much more difficult than the good ones they might have sung.

Nowhere has this been truer than in the Church.

The trouble, we are slowly discovering, has not been with the children and "their level of appreciation"; it has been we, their adult leaders, whose prejudices, tastes, whims, and notions of what constitutes the child mind, who have given birth to tunes and doggerel that no thoughtful mind can contemplate without pain.

Lately several church bodies, through informed and devoted churchmen and church musicians, have faced this trouble and the problems it creates. The result has been the production of a few first-rate children's hymnals. (In the strictest sense they are not hymnals, of course, but the term will serve our purposes here.)

Our Hymns of Praise strikes me as being one of these. The work of the Music Committee of the Mennonite General Conference, under the general editorship of J. Mark Stauffer, the book is a pleasure to look at and an inspiration to page through. Its model appears to have been concordia Publishing House's *Our Songs of Praise,* a children's hymnal indeed worthy of imitation.

Designed primarily for the use of children from the ages of six to eleven, the songs represent generally careful selection, not only for their musical and textual substance, but also for subject variety and inclusiveness. The index lists about 280 titles (including duplications), and the Table of Contents is arranged typically under nine large headings and a number of subheadings. The Preface provides in the valuable and helpful information regarding methods and procedures for leading children in their singing.

Colorful but tasteful illustrations have been supplied by Esther Rose Graber. Type is large and clear, notes are solid and bold, and general makeup has prevented crowding. The Herald Press has done an excellent job of printing and binding.

About a dozen of the songs would better have been left out of the collection. The tunes and lyrics of Bliss, for example, or "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" (and similar items), seem infinitely inferior to the bulk of the songs. Oglevee's "Honor Thy Father and Mother" as unharmonized melody is pale if not puerile.

It seems to me these three principles are worth remembering as we teach hymns and other religious songs to our children:

1. With each hymn (or "chorus") we ask them to sing, *we* are giving them *a conception of God*—an idea of what *God* is.

2. Hymn singing, even in the primary grades, should prepare them for *life in the congregation* and should, therefore, draw heavily on the great hymns of the Church.

3. There are no good hymns which are too difficult for children; they are too difficult only for some adults.

As I paged through the book and reflected on the a cappella congregational singing of the church out of which it comes, I could not help

wondering why a few simple chants were not included. Some of the greatest, as well as the simplest unaccompanied music for the Church is to be found in the ancient chants. Take *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel* and *Adoro Te Devote* as examples: marvelous, tuneful melodies, disarmingly simple, matchless texts. My daughter, age two, sings them easily and loves to sing them: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and "Thee We Adore." I say there are few melodies more beautiful, more appealing, more worshipful or more reverent than these.

The credits for "Away in a Manger" are in error. Luther wrote neither the hymn nor the music attributed to him, nor did Mueller write the music of the alternate tune.

J. Mark Stauffer and the Music Committee of the Mennonite General Conference are to be congratulated on the quality of the hymnal they have produced. Notwithstanding the limitations noted, the book is a fine contribution to a program of enlightened parish music education. Their Church is greatly in their debt.

Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota LELAND B. SATEREN

Un poème du XIX^e siècle sur les Mennonites français. By Jean Séguy. Reprint from *Christ Seul* (Grand-Charmont, Doubs, France) January 1960, Pp. 12. The reprint is available only from the author, Institut Ste. Marie, Rue Croix Guérin, Caen (Calvados), France; the *Christ Seul* number is available from the editor at 50 French francs, new currency .50 francs.

Jean Séguy, who recently published a major research article on the Anabaptists in the *Archives des Sociologie des Religions,* has made a thorough study of the lengthy "poem" by George Schwertfeger, published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* for April 1929 (III, 151-154) under the title "George Schwertfeger's Poem of the Swiss Brethren," which is in fact a rhymed description and characterization of the Anabaptists of Alsace and Lorraine. Séguy also publishes in both German and French translation the full text of the poem itself in twenty stanzas of six lines each.

Séguy dates the time of composition of the poem as 1813, in view of the references to the Elder Jakob Kupferschmidt, who died in that year, as still living, and to Jacques Klopfenstein as the publisher of "almanacs," whose first issue of the annual almanac, *L' Anabaptiste on le Cultivateur par Experience,* appeared in 1812. With the date fixed, we can know the exact period in the life of the Mennonites of Alsace-Lorraine which the author of the poem describes so favorably.

Séguy's most earnest attempts to identify the author prove to be in vain. It appears from the text that he was a schoolteacher, and Séguy speculates that he may have intended his poem to be a sort of advertisement to commend himself to prospective patrons of his school.

In any case, Séguy is convinced that Schwertfeger was thoroughly familiar with the faith, practices, and customs of the Mennonites of the early nineteenth century in France, as well as with their chief elders and preachers, of whom he treats a considerable number in his poem in thumbnail characterizations, and that the poem is accordingly a reliable and very precious source of information. Séguy checks all available sources, such as Pierre Sommer's historical sketches of the French congregations (published in *Christ Seul* in 1929-35) as well as in other French and American publications, both to validate and to illuminate the Schwertfeger account. Among the American sources used, besides the *MQR,* are Franklin Littell's *Anabaptist View of the Church,* Delbert Gratz's *Bernese Anabaptists,*

C. Henry Smith's *Mennonites of America,* and Daniel Kauffman's *Mennonite Cyclopedic Dictionary.* New French publications cited include: Roger Goigeol, *Un Mouvement Pacifique dans la Région de Belfort* (Belfort, 1958), Jules Joachim, "Les Signes Extérieurs d'un Culte," in *Annuaire de la Société d'Histoire Sundgoulienne* (1954), and Professor Leuilliot, "Les Anabaptistes Alsaciens sous le Second Empire, d'apres une Enquete Administrative de 1850" in *Revue d'Alsace* (1947). He also used manuscript materials from the Weierhof archives.

Séguy's scholarly study is most interesting and valuable, and we here express our gratitude to him for illuminating so well a dark corner of French Mennonite history.

Goshen College Biblical Seminary HAROLD S. BENDER

Guy de Brés: Sa Vie. By E. M. Braekman, Lic. Theol. Brussels: Librairie des Eclaireurs Unionistes; 1960. Pp. 277. Bfrs. 90 (paper Bfrs. 75).

The series of semi-popular works on Belgian Protestantism begun with two books by R. Collinet (reviewed in *MQR* XXXIII, 167 and 356) continues with a careful biography of Belgium's most important Reformer and the author of one of the classical Reformed creeds, the "Confessio Belgica." Guy (or Guido) de Brés (or de Bray), born *ca.* 1552 in or around Mons, is one of the major architects of the Reformed tradition. Yet he himself led the life of a hunted outlaw and died a heretic's death at the hands of a Roman Catholic state. Since by 1567 death at the stake had come to be recognized by the Belgian populace as a worthy martyr's fate, Margaret of Parma, serving at the time as Spain's procuratrix in Flanders, directed that Guy should be hanged instead. Guy's offense was however as much political as religious; he was captured at the collapse of a Calvinist uprising in Valenciennes which had successfully defied Margaret's troops from August 1566 to March 1567.

The book is thickly strewn with sixteenth-century citations, which are more than illustrations; they tell part of the story. This heightens its value for readers sufficiently at home in French to savor the archaisms, though readability suffers somewhat.

The work treats principally the external landmarks of the life of de Brés. Another volume on his thought is promised. Little is said here on the extent of Guy's preoccupation with and opposition to the Anabaptists —though it is indicated that a debate in which he participated in Frankfurt in 1556 (*Mennonite Encyclopedia,* I, 428) was with a follower of Sebastian Franck and not with an Anabaptist as *ME* says.

Goshen College Biblical Seminary JOHN H. YODER

Le Martyrologe Protestant des Pays-Bas du Sud au XVIème Siècle. By Alphonse Verheyden. Brussels, Librairie des Eclaireurs Unionistes. 1960. Pp. 285. Bfrs. 90 (paper Bfrs. 75).

The indefatigable publishing activity of Jules Lambotte has brought forth yet another volume in the series, History of Protestantism in Belgium, from which the works of Collinet and Braekman have already been reviewed (*MQR* 1959 and 1960). This work is from the pen of Professor Alphonse Verheyden, Laureate of the Belgian Royal Academy, author of over a score of books and pamphlets on the history of the Reformation in Belgium. Here Verheyden pulls together from earlier specialized research a semi-popular yet careful survey of the martyrs of the Reformation century, including a description of the organization and methods of the In-

quisition. Original documents are abundantly used, and the volume is illustrated with 32 pages of plates, largely reproduced from early martyrologies.

Until 1566-1567 the prosecution of dissenters was the work of the local and provincial magistracies, enforcing edicts of the imperial governors, and spurred on by the Inquisition, especially after the mid-century under the impetus of the Grand Inquisitor Titelmans. The local authorities, offended by the consequent infringement upon their judicial prerogatives by the intervention of central authorities of both state and church, often procrastinated in the execution of their obligation to persecute; frequently this inefficiency was compounded with sympathy for the "heretics" or antipathy for the Inquisitors. After the violent outbreak of political Calvinism in 1566, the coming of the Duke of Alba and the restoration of Spanish dominion were accompanied by the abolition of local and provincial councils' authority, in favor of a new central *Conseil des Troubles,* popularly known as "Blood Council," with emergency authority in all realms, but with special interest in the eradication of dissent. Gradually the subordinate jurisdictions were reinstated, but the *Conseil des Troubles* retained its right of review until 1576.

The last martyr, a 48-year-old Anabaptist woman, was buried alive at Brussels in 1597, but there had been relatively few executions after the mid-seventies. Records indicate that the heretics, whether Lutheran, Calvinist, or Anabaptist, belonged to the upper middle classes (Verheyden, p. 49); the concomitant higher levels of intellectual independence, leadership qualities, and financial independence may help to explain their tenacity in the face of persecution. The Anabaptists were almost always burned; other Protestants were usually hanged or beheaded. The total number of martyrs for all of Belgium (including the part of Flanders now in France) is placed by Verheyden at approximately 3,000, a majority of them Mennonites, the Calvinists suffering more in the restoration period 1567-1573. Perhaps 50,000 more dissidents were driven into exile. Such figures give credence to Verheyden's concluding judgment that the Southern Netherlands were the region where the sixteenth-century struggle between Catholicism and the Reformation faiths was the longest and the most bitter.

One third of the book lists the known martyrs, with as much identification as is possible.

Goshen College Biblical Seminary JOHN H. YODER

Goshen College: 1894-1954. By John Umble. Published by Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., 1955. Pp. 284 + XVI, illustrated. Cloth, $3.00.

The history of Goshen College written in 1954 by John Umble bears the subtitle, "A Venture in Christian Education." The jacket makes it "A Mennonite Venture. . . ." This is more than the history of a college. It is the story of how a church which did not care much about higher education was brought into the business of running a college, and, after some difficulties, succeeded rather well.

If this history was to be written by one who remembered its beginnings, it had to be written when it was. And if it was to be written by one who knew the story by inside participation, John Umble, who was a member of the first graduating class of Elkhart Institute, the predecessor of Goshen College, and who had just retired from the faculty of the college, was the natural choice.

One of the chief merits of this book is that the author knows his sub-

ject matter very well. His details are so abundant that they make his story really live, and he has made few errors that this reviewer could detect. He says (p. 35) that when Hesston Academy was founded it was to be "affiliated" with Goshen College. That word would hardly have been acceptable at Hesston at the time, and there actually was no affiliation, although both schools were operated by the Mennonite Board of Education. A facet of the history that should have been included in the book is the Goshen-Hesston relations—how many Hesston teachers were educated at Goshen and how Hesston College made a major contribution to Goshen College through the personnel which went from the smaller to the larger school. Umble slips into an anachonism when he speaks of the earlier Mennonite Relief Commission (p. 174) as still functioning after World War II.

But the essential facts of the Goshen College story are all there. The first chapter describes the beginnings at Elkhart Institute, not only of Goshen College, but of higher education in the Mennonite Church. Chapter II takes us to Goshen and through the educational leadership of N. E. Byers. Chapter III traces expansion under J. E. Hartzler and the gathering financial storm. The next chapter describes the "Growing Division in the Constituency" as George J. Lapp, H. F. Reist, I. R. Detweiler, and Daniel Kauffman each take a brief turn at the presidency. This period closes as the College is closed for the year 1923-1924. Chapter V shows the new administration under S. C. Yoder gradually succeeding in spite of the depression of the thirties. Chapter VI describes the "Era of Expansion" under E. E. Miller's leadership. There are chapters on extracurricular activities and on the Alumni Association.

Appendices list all officers and teachers of these sixty years, the land owned by the Board, the buildings acquired or erected for Goshen College, the college representatives in intercollegiate forensic contests, and the publications of present faculty members. A section of pictures is enlightening and interesting.

All this material tells well how a small institute at Elkhart began to express the educational yearnings of some of the Mennonites; how the college opened at Goshen; the problems and difficulties of the administrators; the fears and the opposition of the constituency; the rise of the Mennonite Board of Education and how it learned to administer colleges; the faith, the blunders, and the skills of a host of men and women who poured their best into this venture; the struggle for academic responsibility, church acceptance, and financial stability.

But if Umble's closeness to the events and personalities of the story is an advantage, it is also a disadvantage. He is writing about his close friends and neighbors, and his family. There is much emotion involved in his recounting the details of this story, and it would be expecting too much to ask this author to be completely objective.

This reviewer must question the correctness of the thesis that difficulties of the early years were primarily the result of cultural lag. For it is apparent that those who operated the college from 1924 on were a good deal more successful in winning and holding the confidence of the Mennonite people. There was still cultural lag. The chief difference seems to be more emotional acceptance between college people and church leaders. The author admits (p. 7) that in the early years there was sometimes an "irreverent supercilious attitude toward some of the respected leaders of the church." This seems to have influenced the situation more than is granted.

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